

The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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Extends its best wishes to His Majesty King Hussein and the Jordanian people on the occasion of Eid El Fitr. The Star will not appear next Thursday. The coming edition will come out on Thursday 20 February. Happy Eid!

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

JPA and government move to restrain weeklies, prevent changes to press law

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer

THE JORDAN Press Association (JPA) and the government are quietly working together to contain a crisis that threatens to curtail freedom enjoyed by the press in Jordan since the advent of democracy and the passing of a "liberal" press and publication law in 1993. The current crisis is not unrelated to an official distaste for the content and style of most local weeklies, which goes back for more than three years.

Now Lower House deputies, mostly Islamists, have mobilized to pressure the government into amending the present press law and have called in effect for introducing legislation to regulate press freedom. So far the government has been careful not to endorse the deputies' demand. But senior cabinet ministers have said that if the press law is to be amended in these tense conditions, then anything can be expected; including the arbitrary shutdown of newspapers.

The crisis erupted after a local weekly published a sensational story that dealt with intimate marital issues. The story was seen as offensive, graphic in its headlines and even downright obscene.

Public opinion was so outraged by the headlines of the newspaper that Islamist deputies, Bassam Al Umoush launched a vehement attack on the "sensational and yellow press" and demanded that the government make necessary



The sensation is on its way out

amendments to the press law to ensure that such practices are stopped.

Fearing another fall out with the Lower House, the government could only respond by promising to study any proposal presented by the legislature. The National Guidance Committee of the Lower House was to be asked to present its recommendations to put an end to the phenomenon of weeklies that "carry indecent, obscene and unacceptable articles that tarnish our cultural values and traditions."

What added to the deputies' anger was the fact that some weeklies were seen as crossing the line in their personal attacks against deputies and other public figures.

Sensing that public mood was ready to back such measures, which could cost journalists professional freedoms earned under the current law, the JPA decided to intervene. Its intervention, at a time when its own draft law was scheduled to be debated by Parliament in this session, the JPA decided to make its presence

felt. Its council held extensive meetings and finally issued a stern warning to chief editors who are violating legal, professional and ethical codes and promised to activate the JPA's disciplinary council. It threatened that those found guilty of dishonoring their profession could face expulsion from the association, which under the press and the JPA laws automatically revokes the editor's credentials.

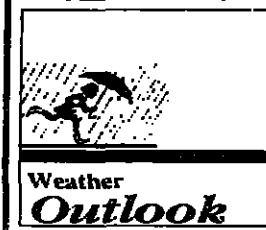
But the JPA wanted the government, and the deputies, to know that it cannot be sidestepped in any suggested measure. The government, on the other hand, is aware that any tinkering with the current laws will be considered as a step backward for democracy and press freedom. It would prefer

to let the JPA deal with the mess. So one cold February evening, a meeting was held at the association's headquarters, attended by the ministers of information and justice, Dr. Marwan Masher and Mr. Abdel Karim Al Dughmi, the council of the JPA and chief editors of most Jordanian weeklies.

Chief editors agreed not to cross three main lines that are considered "taboos" for the press to deal with abusively. These are national unity, cultural values and traditions and personal lives of individuals whether public or private.

It goes without saying that these three issues have always been subject to controversy even since the press was

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Weather Outlook

It promises to be a sunny but cold Eid el Fitr holiday, according to the weatherman. High pressure is moving slowly into the East Mediterranean region. But polar air will continue to sweep in from northern Europe across Turkey. The weather will be partly cloudy on Monday with a chance for scattered

local showers. Temperatures will drop to below their seasonal averages. The weatherman expects more rain by the end of the week.

Over the last few days, the Kingdom was exposed to a cold air mass moving in from northern Europe resulting from a low depression centering over northern Syria and moving eastward.

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Bodies of Israeli soldiers recovered from the crash site Tuesday night

Israel mourns dead soldiers after worst air disaster

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies)—Israel on Wednesday mourned the death of 73 soldiers who perished late Tuesday when two Israeli military helicopters ferrying troops and ammunition into Lebanon apparently collided and crashed in heavy fog over the northern Galilee. The two planes were on their way to bases in the Israeli-occupied buffer zone in southern Lebanon. An investigation into the cause of the accident has begun.

President Ezer Weizman, a former Israeli Air Force commander, called the crash "the worst air disaster in Israel's history."

Witnesses told reporters the two US-made Sikorsky CH53 helicopters slammed together in midair

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Embattled regime in Sudan threatened by conflict

By John Daniszewski
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

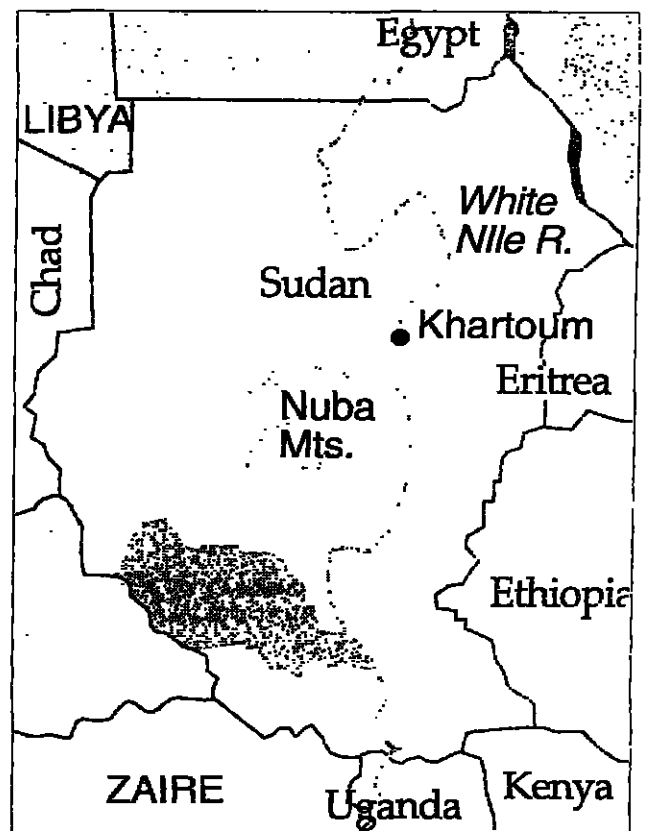
WAD EL MAHI, Sudan—Piled high on overloaded diesel trucks with their piteous cooking pots, bicycles and straw beds, thousands of Sudanese are making a halting escape northward on a rutted dirt track to escape a confusing new war.

From whom are they fleeing? "Ethiopians! Jews! Tigreans!" the black Muslim peasants, dressed in white cotton robes and skullcaps, declare without hesitation.

The Islamist government in Khartoum has blamed a cook's stew of foreign adversaries—including Israel, Britain and the United States—for the latest bout of war nibbling at its vast frontiers. If one subscribes to domino theories, the remote bush battles developing here in northeastern Africa could have ramifications for political Islam not only in Sudan, Africa's largest country and one of its poorest, but also in the nearby Middle East.

The anguish is visible on the faces of the dispossessed, and this much seems certain with the eruption of the new conflict: A nation of 30 million people long beset by poverty, hunger and strife is soon to be facing even more misery.

In an offensive that began Jan. 12, combatants crossed



into Sudan from Ethiopia, occupied two border towns and seized a ribbon of territory 120 miles long and 20 miles wide. Although Sudan has a perennial civil war to the south, near its border with

Uganda and Zaire, it was the first time in a decade that it has faced an assault from the east.

The identity of the invaders

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Husseini solicits Jordan's help on Jerusalem

By Hamdan Al Hajj

Special to The Star

THE LATEST talks between Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabarti and Faisal Al Hussein who visited Jordan last week were focused on Jerusalem which remains a thorny issue in the final status negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis.

Al Hussein, who is in charge of the Jerusalem file in the Palestine National Authority, told the Prime Minister that the Arab inhabitants of Jerusalem are subjected to daily ill-treatment by Israelis in a bid to force them out of the city.

Husseini warned that Israeli policies are aimed at changing the demographic structure of the holy city and exerting pressure on Palestinians to accept Israeli conditions before the final status negotiations approaches. By that time, the PNA, according to Al Hussein, will have nothing to negotiate on with Israelis.

Al Hussein's visit to Jordan was targeted at discussing the issue of Jerusalem with His Majesty King Hussein who shows much concern for this holy city and acknowledges the rights of Palestinians to establish their state on Palestinian land.

On the other hand, the issue of Judaizing Jerusalem was on top of the agenda of the meeting that was held recently between Kabarti and the Lower House Committee of Arab and International Affairs. However, the Prime Minister told members of the committee that the PNA pays as much attention to the case of refugees.

Mr. Kabarti stressed that Jordanian-Palestinian relations are moving on the right track. He confirmed that the clouds

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JUMBO ROUNDUP—Paul Seigel, director of field activities for the International Fund for Animal Welfare, leads elephants from the streets of Bangkok to the Bankapi Sanctuary outside the city. Dozens of elephants have been removed from the traffic and dangers of the city, along with their owners who will continue to entertain tourists in the safety of the sanctuary. (Feature Photo Service)

In Egypt, public outcry over teen 'cult'

By Nicholas Goldberg
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

CAIRO—In the dead of night last week, Egyptian security forces burst into the houses of dozens of affluent Cairo families and arrested more than 75 teenagers on charges of devil worship.

In the days that followed, as their "confessions" leaked out to local newspapers, members of the cult allegedly admitted to praising and glorifying Satan, wearing black cloaks and listening to heavy-metal music.

And some newspaper accounts had them confessing to holding drug-induced sex orgies, sacrificing animals and planning to burn down local mosques—activities sure to horrify this conservative Islamic country. Much was written, in particular, about the black-painted fingernails of female cult members.

"If they renounce their beliefs, they may be pardoned," Grand Mufti Nasser Farid Wassei said last week, calling the alleged Satanists "apostates."

"But if they persist in their sin, we should carry out the penalty prescribed by Islamic law." The penalty for apostasy is death. The penalty for "undermining" or "deriding" religion is three years in prison. More than 30 of those arrested were released from jail for lack of evidence, but the rest remain behind bars.

The episode has offered Egyptians an opportunity for self-examination. While a few voices have argued that the activities of the young Satanists were overdramatized, most of the response has been to bemoan the spread of foreign influences that have "corrupted" Egyptian youth and turned them away from Islam. The Egyptian Parliament, for instance, passed a motion last week condemning "deviation

from the traditions of Egyptian society."

First to be blamed for the appearance of the Satanic cult was heavy-metal music. Compact discs by Metallica, Black Sabbath and Megadeth were said to have been found at the homes of the alleged cultists. T-shirts printed with "strange designs" and Gothic symbols reportedly were seized by the state security police.

The Internet, which has been gaining popularity in Egypt in recent months, came in for significant criticism as well, for giving Egyptian children easy access to presumably perverted Western ideas.

"Clearly, on the back of the communications revolution, a large number of ideas opposed to traditional standards are now readily available and can be easily accessed on global networks such as the Internet," wrote Al-Ahram Chairman Ibrahim Nafie in a column in the newspaper.

Some analysts went so far as to blame Western fast-food establishments, apparently because the "devil-worshippers"

had taken to meeting at a local McDonald's. Salah Abdel-Met'el, a Cairo University sociology professor, explained that because Egyptian youth find themselves living in a cultural vacuum, "we should not be surprised to find them turning to another culture, or standing around in front of fast-food restaurants, with all the cultural domination that that implies."

Looking slightly deeper for explanations, some analysts have cited the breakdown of the Egyptian family structure, the weakening of Islam in Egyptian society, and the failure of affluent parents to expend the time and effort needed to raise their children properly.

And finally, there were those who turned to Israel to explain the phenomenon of devil worship. The head of al-Azhar, the highest authority of Sunni Muslims—who make up the majority of Islam's followers—called the Satanic cult part of "a Zion-



Young Egyptians accused of devil worship

ist plot aimed at sowing corruption." Others did the same.

"We should not underestimate the role played by the arch-enemy of Egypt and of the Arab and Muslim world, the state that has recently smuggled large quantities of drugs into Egypt with the intention of

damaging the minds of the young, in subverting traditional values," Nafie wrote.

So far, President Hosni Mubarak has remained silent on the issue of devil worship—seemingly the only public figure in Egypt who has refrained from commenting.

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Diplomatic efforts surge to end suffering of Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait

AMMAN (Star)—The case of the Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait is causing a public outcry in Jordan. However, according to Omani and Qatari diplomatic sources in Kuwait, the 35 Jordanian prisoners held in jail are in good health.

Jordan called on Arab and foreign diplomats to investigate the beatings of Jordanian prisoners by Kuwaiti special security officers that took place last week.

His Majesty King Hussein summoned, early this week, the American and British ambassadors in Amman and expressed concern over reports about mistreatment of Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait. He asked them to clarify the situation.

However, a memo distributed in Amman, early this week, by relatives of the prisoners confirmed that 400 Kuwaiti officers broke into the Sleibiyeh Central prison on 22 January and attacked prisoners with clubs.

The Jordanian prisoners were badly beaten and 20 of them were transferred to hospital, suffering from broken bones, three of them remained in hospital.

The Qatari ambassador in Kuwait, Mohammad Al Ansari, explained that "what really happened was that a Kuwaiti prisoner escaped from jail, and this incident led to a change in the whole security system in charge."

The new security guards were investigating other matters related to drug smuggling and cellular telephone sets that were exchanged secretly among prisoners of different nationalities. Al Ansari told *Ad-Dustour* Arabic daily.

When the guards searched in the cells for those banned items, they clashed with [non-Jordanian] prisoners who committed to become violent and damaged various things in the cells.

Al Ansari confirmed that all prisoners were asked to go out where they were searched, but pointed out that Jordanians were not the target.

The Omani ambassador, Nasir Al Khrousi who also visited the prison accompanied by the head of the Kuwaiti Red Crescent told the Kuwaiti daily *Arab Times* that Jordanian prisoners informed him that they are in good condition.

Al Khrousi was quoted by the newspaper as saying that he interviewed 35 detained prisoners who pointed out that they are put in a special ward far away from prisoners with criminal offences. They stressed that the political detainees were not involved in last incidents.

Meanwhile, a delegation representing the relatives of the prisoners visited the Prime Ministry to inquire about the situation of their relatives in Kuwaiti jail.

Government response is cool, observers say. Officials say that they are still waiting official confirmations from Kuwait about alleged torture of Jordanian prisoners stressing that it could not act until such confirmation is received.

But the wisdom of this policy is questioned by many in Jordan who say that it would be seen as a sign of weakness by the Kuwaitis. Already calls can be heard from popular organizations for the government to take a strong position in this regard.

The International Red Cross office in Amman, which has access to the prison, has declined to confirm or deny the attack.

The Freedoms Committee of the Professional Associations, has taken the initiative to form a national committee to follow up on the situation of Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait.

The committee organized a meeting last Saturday that was attended by family members of

the prisoners to decide on a course of action on behalf of the detainees.

The families of prisoners have long sought to free their relatives that were held in Kuwait since March 1991 when Kuwait was freed from Iraqi occupation.

Back then the Kuwaiti authorities refused to confirm that they held any Jordanian prisoners. Today, the situation has changed. However, there are still Jordanians who are missing.

However, the committee is strongly following the case of the latest prisoners. In its meeting last Wednesday, activists drew up a long-term plan to defend the right of Jordanian prisoners and to make sure that they would have good conditions.

"We will follow up the prisoners case with international organizations to arrange to transfer them to complete their sentences in Jordan," Dr Ishaq Khairi, head of the committee told *The Star*. For this purpose, "a panel will be formed which will include representatives of the families of the detainees and influential public figures as well as nominees from the Arab Organization for Human Rights and all other concerned organizations and associations."

The International Committee of the Red Cross in Kuwait told *Ad-Dustour* that it paid a series of visits to the Central Prison in Kuwait and handed a report to the Kuwaiti authorities about the recent events.

Kuwait has called on diplomats of Arab and friendly countries to visit the central jail and to see for themselves about the conditions of Jordanian detainees in Kuwait.

The Kuwaiti State Security Court already convicted the 35 Jordanian prisoners for their alleged "collaboration" with Iraq during its invasion of Kuwait in 1990-91. ■

Israel mourns dead soldiers after worst air disaster

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before plummeting to the ground in flames just south of the Lebanese border. One exploded immediately and fell in pieces into a cemetery at Kibbutz Daphna and the other, remaining intact until impact, crashed into an empty guest-house at a settlement called Shaar Yishuv, the witnesses recounted.

There were no reports of hostile fire and the Israeli military said the crash was assumed to be accidental, apparently the result of the midair collision in poor visibility caused by rain and fog.

"I heard two explosions, and I ran outside," Sylvia Cohen, the guesthouse owner, told *Israel Radio*. "I saw the helicopter hover in the air, and then it crashed into our guest house. And then there were explosions. Everything exploded."

"A soldier was thrown from the helicopter," she continued. "He landed near me. He still had a pulse, but I couldn't save him. It was awful, just too awful."

Flames, fueled by gasoline and exploding ammunition, shot into the air. The military cordoned off dozens of square miles, creating massive traffic jams and preventing hundreds of residents from reaching their homes in the rolling farmland.

Charred bodies were brought to a makeshift morgue in a nearby military base. The army set up emergency hotlines for inquiring parents but the system crashed several hours later because of a flood of calls.

Military censors delayed news of the disaster for more than two hours, seeking to notify victims' families first. A similar model of transport helicopter crashed in 1977 in the West Bank, killing 54 paratroopers. ■



● A Muslim cleric examines the rich vegetable produce in one of the souks in downtown Amman during the hustle-bustle of a Ramadan day. People can be seen in the background shopping for the Iftar meal. This has become a common sight in Amman and other cities in Jordan.

● The art of making Qataief (pancakes) is a centuries-old tradition not only in Jordan but in the Arab world. Located in the city center, Abu Ali's Qataief are one of the best in Amman. He has been making them for over 20 years.



Hussein solicits Jordan's help on Jerusalem

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that marked this relationship in the past have been cleared.

He stressed that Jordan strongly supports the establishment of a Palestinian state which he pointed out is in the interest of both Jordanians and Palestinians.

The redeployment of Israeli troops from Hebron is regarded by Jordan as a significant achievement since the signing of the Oslo accords. Israelis who previously refused to abandon or withdraw from any part of the West Bank and Gaza have recently submitted to Palestinian demand to restore part of these lands. And this is seen by Kabarti as a crack in the Zionist doctrine since the major parties in Israel, "Labor and Likud," have finally agreed to withdraw from some Palestinian lands.

Kabarti denied that King Hussein pressured PNA president Yasser Arafat to accept his initiative on redeployment from Hebron. He stressed that such an agreement was concluded upon mutual consent between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Other issues discussed in the Lower House Committee highlighted the Syrian position with regard to the Hebron deal. Syria is not happy and sees it as undermining the Syrian-Israeli peace talks.

But Kabarti, and members of the committee also talked about developments in Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations following the last incidents concerning Jordanian prisoners in Kuwaiti jails, and the Saudi-Jordanian ties. Kabarti sees relations with the latter country to be excellent.

Commenting on the political developments in Sudan, Kabarti pointed out that the former Sudanese Prime Minister Al Sadeq Al Mahdi who fled to Ethiopia recently wished to visit Jordan but his demand was neither accepted nor refused. Jordan is still negotiating with the Sudanese government on this issue, but it does not want its relations with Sudan to be marred or as meddling in the internal affairs of Sudan.

The Prime Minister implied that Syria is worried about Jordan's active role in mobilizing coordination between Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian stances and is seeking to minimize such role.

However, he noted that the resumption of the Syrian-Israeli peace talks is a matter of time and all the evidence imply that the US is doing its best to finalize these talks.

Kabarti pointed out that the Jordanian-Lebanese relations witnessed a sort of tension recently after a Jordanian citizen was detained but lately released. ■

JPA and government move to restrain weeklies, prevent changes to press law

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enacted. The February 2 agreement has its critics. Although there is a general consensus that the JPA's role must be reactivated, there is a feeling that the restrictions are too general and fluid and can be easily misinterpreted by the JPA, the government or the deputies. The Code of Honor that was agreed upon by the general assembly of the JPA back in April 1996 had also emphasized on the need to respect the three issues in question. But the weeklies were accused of trespassing on

these taboos nonetheless.

Minister of Information Marwan Muasher made it clear that all legal cases initiated by the Press and Publications Dept. recently were non political and all dealt with issues relating to ethics. Journalists are now asking about the norms that will guide the judgment of the JPA monitors on related violations? JPA's President Saif Al Sharif stressed that the JPA's disciplinary council will be firm in dealing with alleged violations "in accordance with the spirit of the Code of Honor."

"The association is warning

against any attempt to amend the Press and Publication Law, unless such amendments aim to consolidate and guarantee press gains," the JPA statement said.

"There are logical reasons behind the recent escalation. I personally support such strict measures. It was a result of an accumulated violations that happened in the past year," said Jihad Al Moumami, editor-in-chief of *Al Bilad* weekly, whose paper sparked public outrage when a headline on its front page, two weeks ago, openly dealt with marital affairs and homosexuality.

Al Moumami sent an apology to the JPA explaining that he was not in charge at that time and that he was busy with the death of his uncle.

There are more than 40 licensed weeklies, 15 of which are publishing regularly. In recent weeks five more weeklies were licensed. Most are sensational in nature and competition has led to increasing coverage of sexual issues and attack on public figures, as Moumami explained.

At the time, the weeklies were considered by many as an alternative to a tame and conservative daily press. Currently there are more than 25 legal cases against weekly papers, the majority are still before the courts. More than 10 have to deal with charges of "spreading immoral and pornographic materials."



Al Sharif

The 2 February meeting has raised other related issues such as the detention of journalists and their alleged ill-treatment in prison. The latest case was that of Chief Editor of *Abel Rubbo* weekly, Omar Al Nadi, who was denied bail and had his head clean shaven by a prison personnel while in custody. Such treatment is usually awarded to common criminals. The JPA is said to have received assurances that journalists will only be interrogated by a specially appointed prosecutor and will stand trial before a special magistrate.

Abel Rubbo's editor is facing two cases of slander brought by Minister of Public Works Abdel Hadi Al Majali, and Islamist deputy Ibrahim Zaid Al Kilani. ■

Embattled regime threatened by conflict

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is a matter of debate. Sudan says Ethiopian army troops carried out the lightning attack. But the National Democratic Alliance—a partnership formed in 1995 between black African guerrilla fighters from southern Sudan and Arab foes of the regime from the north—says it has invaded, without any help from outsiders.

No one thinks the invaders have the numbers or weaponry to defeat Sudan's armed forces.

Rebel spokesmen say the real aim of the push, which is toward the strategic Roseires hydroelectric dam on the Blue Nile, is to trigger a coup or a popular uprising against the 7-year-old government, which is led by President Omar Hassan Ahmed Bashir and Parliament Speaker Hassan Turabi of the National Islamic Front.

"In a way, this is a battle between Christianity and Islam," said Khider Moussa Habir, the lanky, white-turbaned mayor of Wad el Mahi, a town of 5,000 on the front line of the latest battle. "We are holy warriors. ... If they put their authority here, then there will be no Islam."

Wad el Mahi is 25 miles southeast of the dam. Its architecture consists of round, thatched mud huts set off by straw fences. There is no electricity or pavement, and there are no telephones. Herders carry bows and arrows in



Bashir

wooden quivers, and the most common locomotion is by donkey or, for the well-to-do, camel.

For centuries this area on the upper tributaries of the Nile has been the southern edge of the Islamic world. When the sun sets, its inhabitants bow down in unison amid their baobab and thorn trees toward Mecca to pray.

Muslims make up 70 percent of Sudan's population, and Christians and followers of traditional African religions make up the other 30 percent. Since independence from Britain and Egypt in 1956, there has been ongoing war between the Muslim north and the non-Muslim south, except during one 11-year truce. During this period, an estimated 1.3 million people have died from the fighting and war-related hunger.

The rebels in the current offensive say they represent democracy, not a particular religion. They deny accusations from Khartoum that they have been armed by Israel and the United States to topple one of the most militantly Islamist governments in the region, one that has been a fixture on the US list of those who support terrorism. Sudan's most prominent foreign ally is Iran.

The rebels' claim to transcend the Muslim-Christian divide is bolstered by the support they are now receiving from a number of prominent Muslim opposition politicians, including Sudan's last elected prime minister, Sadek Mahdi, who was ousted in a 1989 military coup but remained in Sudan until he fled into exile in December.

When a convoy of chanting demonstrators snaked through the city last week chanting "God is Great" and waving copies of the Koran, people on the street watched listlessly. Ordinary Sudanese—merchants, students and even soldiers in uniform—volunteered to foreign journalists that they would welcome a change of regime.

Although the government-controlled media has claimed that troops are mounting a vigorous counteroffensive, marshaling large numbers of fighters to regain lost territory, a visit to the combat area suggested that the initiative remained with the insurgents.

There were no signs that heavy weapons or aircraft had been brought to the area, and little fortification was visible. Morale in the army, badly chewed up in its initial contact with the invaders, was low. "I think if they get as far as here, then a large number of people will go over and join them," said one soldier in Damazin, requesting anonymity.

"We want the situation to change," he said. "Instead of there being this government belonging to Turabi, we want somebody else." ■

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Husseini solicits Jordan's help on Jerusalem

Continued from page 1
The Jordanian government has been asked to support the efforts of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) in the West Bank. The IAF is a religious and political movement that has been active in the West Bank since the 1980s. It has been accused of being a front for the PLO and of being involved in terrorism. The Jordanian government has been asked to support the IAF in its efforts to establish an Islamic state in the West Bank. The Jordanian government has been asked to support the IAF in its efforts to establish an Islamic state in the West Bank.

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Would they, won't they?

With the increasing talk about an imminent cabinet reshuffle, the Islamic Action Front deputies appear to face splits in their ranks about to join or not to join. Split might be too harsh a word to use for the Islamic movement which has always been characterized by doves and hawks, that is Islamic deputies who would consider joining the government and those who would oppose. So this is really part of an on-going debate and some might even suggest that it is a healthy one too since it keeps the adrenalin going within the movement. During the last Shura Council of the Muslim Brotherhood, trouble occurred over the same point. The hawks, those who opposed participation in the government, won the vote. Bassam Al Ummoush, considered a dove, withdrew from the meeting as he was not allowed to present his paper that was in favor of participation. But on the other hand, deputy Abdullah Al Akaleh presented a paper calling for joining the government. Al Ummoush said Al Akaleh's paper was very pragmatic that was based on constructive thinking and scientific analysis. By contrast he said that the working paper against participation presented by deputy Hamam Said said nothing new. He pointed to the old cliches that it was haram to join this government or any other ones that do not survive for an Islamic state. Al Ummoush said that this is an old argument. However, the deputy would not commit himself as whether he would personally join the next government if he was asked to.

Israeli and US investors flock to the Valley

Israeli and American investors could be having their eye on the Jordan Valley. Good news, relief at last it might be exclaimed. An Israeli and an American delegation visited the Valley earlier this week with big investment projects in mind. It is understood that they are looking for money-spinning projects like fish-farming, industry and tourism. What is more interesting, or sad as the case may be, is that farmer who, in an interview, expressed satisfaction over the Israeli interest in the Valley. Such a reaction would be considered natural in the light of neglect in that part of the world. The farmer of today, is not the confident, prosperous farmer of yesterday. With little help from the government, most farmers these days have accumulated huge debts, a situation that has been compounded by successive bad harvests.

Scandal in the Doctors Association

This time it is the Doctors Association. One would never have thought it, but there is a wide allegation of corruption and mismanagement. It is also believed that JD 734,000 have been embezzled from the fund of the association over many years. The association has also lost up to JD 2.1 million dinars because of speculation in stocks and shares. These revelations are creating a major row. Doctors are now accusing their council of trying to cover up the allegations. If a full investigation is not carried out to see who the culprits are, they are threatening to take the council of the association to court. This is seen as very bad timing for the upcoming April elections. It is also bad news for the current president of the association, Dr Bassam Al Dajani, who is standing for re-election. It is now safe to assume that the presidency will now be captured by the leftists, nationalists and centrists who are putting forward Dr Mohammad Al Owran as their candidate.



Al Dajani

Forgers caught red-handed

Undercover police recently arrested two men in the Madaba governorate for allegedly distributing forged JD 5 and JD 20 banknotes. Sources at the Public Security Directorate said that it has been noticed recently that some forged banknotes were exchanged by people in Madaba. As a result investigations started immediately and the forgers were arrested after confessing to the crime. The two men earlier rented a computer to draw and print forged notes of 20 dinar bill. While facing difficulty in distributing the JD 20 series, they began forging JD 5 banknote.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan attending the ceremony at the King Abdallah Mosque that was held last Tuesday by the Ministry of Awqaf in celebration of Lailat al Qadr (the night the Holy Quran was revealed to Prophet Mohammad). The Prince called for the establishment of an International Zakat (alms) and Support Foundation. He referred to the importance of the Zakat as vital to development and rehabilitation projects adding that it enhances cooperation among the people of Islam all over the world.

JLA coming elections could mean a lot of surprises

By Star Staff Writer

THIS YEAR'S elections of the Jordanian Lawyers Association (JLA) for the 1997-1999 breaks the mold. In addition to the two traditional foes, pan-Arabists and Islamists, who have dominated the association for the last 20 years, this year they are joined by an old warrior, Fatah—the PLO's mainstream organization, and the ruling party in the Palestine National Authority. The two-yearly elections, which will start on 7 March, puts the other political trends on alert for Fatah is putting up candidates for the presidency, the post of vice-president and for the 10-seat council. Three candidates for the presidency and 23 for the council, including one female, have so far registered their names. The Lawyers Association could be facing tough times ahead. Certainly the battle has started. Fatah supporters have already chosen all of their candidates. Zohdi Al Dessy is standing for president. Al Dessy is a prominent unionist, who has been active for about 20 years. He surprised lawyers with his plans to run for election, as Fatah used to run under a pan-Arabist umbrella. The current president of the association, Hussein Mjalli, belonging to the so-called old guard, is running for re-election. He represents the strong pan-Arabist and leftist trends in the association. Mjalli has been JLA president for three different terms. The Islamists are also put-

ting up a tough contender for the post of president. Saleh Al Armouti is again the choice of the Islamic Action Front who lost last year's elections by 22 votes. Mjalli replaced Dr Kamal Nasser who joined the team of Prime Minister, Abdel Karim Al Kabari last January. About 2000 lawyers have paid their fees to have the right to vote. Only about 60 out of 200 West Bank lawyers who belong to the JLA are expected to vote in March. Despite the small number of the West Bank lawyers, opposition to their participation is likely to resurface again from other lawyers who believe that there should be separation between Palestinian lawyers practicing on the West bank and Jordanians. This controversy began two years when West Bank lawyers were not allowed to vote. However, it was quashed when the courts ruled in favor of West Bankers participating in JLA elections.

Despite this, observers will be watching for developments on this front. As of early this week, seven pan-Arabist and leftist parties announced their full support to Mjalli. They include the Socialist Arab Ba'ath, Nationalist Action, Progressive Arab Ba'ath, Arab Land (new party), Democratic Nationalist (under foundation), the Communist Party, People's Democratic and the Popular Unity. Sources in the JLA are very optimistic about Mjalli's chances of being reelected for another term. They explained that because Islamists and Fatah are historically at odds. This will limit the battle between Al Armouti and Al Dessy whose supporters will be divided between both trends. This will favor Mjalli whose camp is more cohesive.

Others plainly believe that a deal between the Islamists and the pan-Arabists will be struck to oust Fatah candidates in the first round of the elections. Both trends are united politically on opposing the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, this is common to all the 12 professional associations. Such platform, however, is not in tune with the political belief of Fatah, whose leaders have signed a peace treaty with Israel. The centrist conservative trend in the association is also expected to make a pitch for the presidency. This fourth trend which supported government's policy in 1995 to depoliticize the JLA has pretty much failed to change things. The trend is being led by Khalaf Massadeh who lost his bet on the presidency in past elections. However Massadeh has not lost his appetite and is certain to stand for the coming election.

Weather outlook

Continued from page 1

Heavy rain as well as hail and snow fell in most parts of the country promising a good season for farmers. Sources at the Ministry of Agriculture pointed out that the recent rain has helped boost Jordan's water reserve. Capacity at dams were as follows as of last Tuesday: King Talal Dam, 54.5 million cubic meters.

Al Arab Dam, 11 million cubic meters. Sharhabil Dam, 2 million cubic meters. Al Kafreia Dam 1 million cubic meters. Shueib Dam 907,000 cubic meters. The total reserve in these dams was about 69 million cubic metres. The average rainfall last Tuesday was 13.6 millimeters in Amman, 8.2 mm in

Madaba, 27 mm in Salt, 3.5 mm in Zarka, 18.6 mm in Irbid, 15.4 mm in Al Mazar, 12 mm in Jerash, 3.1 mm in Al Mafraq, 23 mm in Karak, 4 mm in Shobak, 2.6 mm in Wadi Mousa, 3.5 mm in Taflelah and 32 mm in Ajloun. Sources at the Greater Amman Municipality stressed that no emergency cases were reported because of the heavy rain and confirmed that the municipality is well prepared to deal with any emergencies that might occur.

Poor productions beset JTV Ramadan programs

AMMAN (Star)—It's thumps down for JTV this Ramadan. Its choice of programs, namely local drama and comedy, to put it mildly, is disappointing. With poor story lines, poor productions and poor taste, Jordan Television has stumbled and is now being criticized by the media and the public. Our intention here is not to slag off JTV. Indeed the television station has real potential; it has the qualified cadre to produce and commission programs as it has done so in the past. One can only sympathize since the reason for this Ramadan's trivial harvest is JTV's cash-strapped budget, resulting in a never ending cycle of low-budget programs. One of the most irritating programs is the candid-camera like series by the once-promising actor Rabie' Shehab. His Warak, Warak sit-com is actually a poor imitation of similar programs made all over the world. Started in America, the "Candid Camera" television program has been adapted by almost every TV station in the Arab world. Shehab is a talented Jordanian actor, yet he didn't do the program justice. Night after night, viewers went through 20 minutes of the actor making fool of himself whilst trying to make fun of real life human situations. The program succeeded in irritating and offending people. As with other programs on JTV, Warak, Warak lacked the originality and resources that are necessary to make it a success. If it was meant to be entertaining, well it failed. Warak, Warak sadly only served to embarrass people. The episode where Shehab throws a twenty-dinar on the street and waits to see who would pick it up takes a cheap shot at unsuspecting people that should not be shown on television. This scene can only question people's honesty in this country because it showed people picking up the bill and walking away. By contrast, Syrian television made great headway this holy month. In fact many Jordanian viewers switched to Syrian TV for better programs. People were glued to drama and other programs on the Syrian Arabic channel. Comedy was only matched by serious drama that for the first time excelled all television productions in the Arab world. A case in point is Thuria, a drama production about life in Syria at the outbreak of World War I and the final days of Ottoman rule. This was matched by the historical quality of drama series that obviously involved meticulous historical research and high quality production. Such quality was obvious in the stage set, costumes and casting of actors. Viewers were transferred to the era of Pashas and landed gentry. The way they lived, dressed and ruled was vividly portrayed to show us a rare glimpse of our own past that was buried in history books. Besides Thuria, another epic drama is Al Ababeed which tells the story of Queen Zannobia and the Tadmur civilization that existed in Syria before it was destroyed by the Romans. Historical dramas are not new to Arabic television, but Al Ababeed production was much more than that. It was a fantasia of talent that combined only the most professional of actors with the whole back-up staff of directors, producers, make-up artists and technicians. These were necessary to produce a final product, that displayed nothing but the best. Underlying such macro-production is finance. Syrian TV is willing to spend massive amounts on its programs. Thuria, for example, is said to have cost \$1 million to make. This kind of money is virtually non-existent in our country. The Syrian experiment is worth studying and emulating here in Jordan. We hope that the planned moves to make JTV financially and administratively independent will again attract producers to invest in Jordanian productions that can once again produce the best in Arab programs.



Shehab

H a p p y E i d

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Kick the Habit! Stop Smoking!

LURIE'S WORLD



Driving can be hazardous to your health!

By Musa Shtetwi

IN THEORY, driving a car to work or for leisure should be an enjoyable and pleasurable activity. But theory is one thing and reality is another, at least when it comes to driving in Jordan and especially in Amman. In fact, driving is a real hassle, a stressful activity and a risky endeavor.

Jordan ranks amongst the 10 highest countries in the world in accident rates. Last year witnessed an increase in road accidents causing unbearable and unacceptable human and material losses. The streets of Jordan were the scene of 27,000 accidents causing 453 unnecessary deaths and 12,721 injuries with various degrees of severity. That means that for every 1,000 people, three are at risk of being involved in an accident, the number will double if we only take the adult population. The material loss is also staggering. The cost of last year's accidents was estimated at 120 million JD. This amounts to three percent of the Gross Domestic Product (or three percent of our external debt).

Well, if you are lucky to stay alive and without being involved in an accident, you can rest assured that your time driving in the streets of Amman would not be trouble-free. Most likely, your experience will be psychologically stressful. The majority of our drivers seem to abide by no recognizable rules, logic, ethical standards or respect for each other. The average driver is careless (for his/her life and for the life of others) and arrogant. They seem to think that they drive in an open space racing up and down the roads. They are insulted if you bypass them and their manhood is insulted if they do not arrive first. More importantly, they seem to think that they are above the law, or that the law was not put for them but for others. So, they break the law (when they can) with no self or internal control. This might be a spillover of our patriarchal value system.

To complicate the matter more, pedestrian's behavior is rather illogical, risky, and un-

predictable adding to the nerve-racking exercise of driving. They cross the streets anywhere and anytime jumping in front of you at once. They rest their fate with God and the responsibility of avoiding the accident with you.

The assumption being that the driver has to manage with God's will to avoid hitting them. Additionally, the streets of our cities are almost always crowded and congested beyond hope. The lack of driving skills and ethical standards aggravates the problem. For instance, drivers race each other, jerk from one lane to another at random, blow the horns willy-nilly... etc. The end result is quite simply chaos.

What are the factors that seem to contribute to this problem? There are several interrelated factors that produce this problem. First, the lack of skills, disregard of driving ethics, and lack of a sense of responsibility towards other drivers, pedestrians, and the public at large. Simply our drivers have no patience or respect for others on the road and thus turn into selfish human beings. This makes their behavior unpredictable. So you have to be on guard all the time.

Second, there are too many cars and other vehicles on the road. The fact that private cars are the main method of transportation makes the number of vehicles unreasonably high. The sheer number of cars on the roads is apt to create a problem thus contributing to the "unorganized chaos" in our streets.

Third, the poor and unorganized public transport system is a major part of the problem. The inefficient public transport system makes it incumbent upon people to use their vehicles to go back and forth to work. For all practical purposes,



Human chaos at the Raghdan Bus station. This scene has been repeated almost every day during the holy month of Ramadan

es, the public transport system is run by taxis and mini-buses. They are owned by private individuals and not by companies. Take mini-buses for example, in order to compete with each other, drivers do everything possible to reach passengers first even if that means speeding, stopping in the wrong place, or carrying more passengers than they should.

The main reason for that is the greed of owners who ask the drivers to give a set amount of money and keep the rest. This means that the drivers are overworked and combat fiercely with each other, thus making the likelihood of accidents ever more likely. Last year alone 59 percent of those buses were involved in road accidents. Considering that they carry a lot of people with them makes the risk for citizens even higher. Also this type of system makes scheduling impossible causing severe lack of transportation in some locations and at most times. The same thing almost applies to taxis.

Finally, the laws that govern driving are archaic and the way that these laws are enforced is also inadequate. The emphasis of current laws is mainly on speeding and the conditions of vehicles. Laws need to exist for a whole set of other road vi-

olations. For instance, it's very likely to see people changing lanes at impulse or to drive in the wrong lane. Such behavior needs to be checked and monitored. Furthermore, because traffic fines do not accumulate on points whereby violators going beyond certain points risk losing their licenses, people are not deterred from committing more violations. Also, some people consider themselves above the law, since they can cancel their traffic violations which means it is easy for them not to respect the law.

When will the day come when a minister loses his license because he accumulated the maximum number of violations and then be forced to take rehabilitation driving lessons? People violate the law because they know that the law does not apply equally to all and there are some people who are above the law.

In order to remedy the situation, a specialized task force should be formed immediately with all specializations in order to chart out a national strategy to solve this problem.

The writer, who is a Sociology Professor at the University of Jordan, is a regular contributor to The Star.

Middle East Beat

by Khairi Janbe

Sting in the tail

A FEW unexpected events occurred recently leaving a deep impression on the state of Jordan as well as Jordanian citizens. For a start, it is becoming increasingly apparent that our country, and despite its respectable record in upholding human rights, advancing participatory democracy, enhancing pluralism, and being a source of stability and moderation to the region, still has to compete for its share of development partnership with the advanced world.

Israel, a new potential partner in peace and development, still views its security as being linked to the Gulf states, creating a *de facto* division of the region into security arrangements. In Lebanon, internal security agencies assassinate a naturalized Jordanian citizen, and the murderers walk away free, while other fraternal security officials arrest a Jordanian citizen without any justification, to release him much later with even less justifications.

In Kuwait, well-armed and well-trained special security teams, practice their recent fighting skills on unarmed Jordanian prisoners whom they should have released a long time ago.

While at the same time, Jordan has not spared any effort in supporting the release of the many Kuwaiti prisoners, held in unknown locations in Iraq. Internally, our search for identity and the construction of civil society have been martyred on the altar of divisions, sectarianism, and electioneering, rather than adhering to the method that has always kept the fabric of our society together, that of national consensus.

These series of horrors indicate that there is an imbalance in viewing Jordan from the external angle, and that its citizens who love it most are the ones willing to hurt it most. Our sincere belief in pluralism and its various components of a multi-party democracy, cultural diversity, freedom of religious practice, and inter-faith dialogue, are the important components of our aim to build a civil society that is based on institutions, and the rule of law.

The process may seem spiral at times, and may have its ups and downs as well, but throughout this process, the fabric of our society must not be allowed to be torn, no matter how good-willed may be the participants in the stretching process.

It is not Jordan's moderation in matters of internal politics that is at fault; but rather the ignorance in democratic practice that needs to be adjusted, and adjustment should be applied whenever the self-correcting mechanism that regulates the boundaries of civility in our society loses its bearings. In being moderate and confidently absorptive, Jordan does not emasculate itself from the power of reason, for we do realize that only in time, that ideas can mature into practice.

As for the external situation, once again the role of our moderate influence must not be misconstrued as weakness. It is our chosen path to enter the 21st century. The history of our country shows, that we have never been weak in resolve, nor in sacrifice, and we have always given as good as we have taken. Our patience and magnanimity are the lessons of the long-line Hasbani philosophy and practice, and if we abhor belligerency and believe in discourtesy to solve problems, we ought not be taken for granted, as the sting in the tail is still there.

Our Say...

Pulling out of south Lebanon

THE MID-air collision between two Israeli army transport helicopters on Tuesday, in which 73 soldiers were killed, is a grim reminder of the state of war that still exists between Israel and its two northern neighbors.

The two helicopters were transporting soldiers and ammunition to the Israeli-occupied strip in southern Lebanon. On the same day skirmishes between Lebanese national resistance members and Israeli backed militias promised to escalate. In recent months dozens of Israeli soldiers and their Lebanese allies were killed in ambushes in the Israeli controlled buffer zone, occupied since 1982.

Tuesday's crash could not be separated from the continuing conflict along Israel's northern borders. It comes only days after a number of Israeli politicians, led by Youssi Beilin, called on their government to consider a unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

The so-called buffer zone has failed to achieve the desired target of safeguarding Israel's northern borders. Almost a year ago Israel launched its "Grapes of Wrath" operation to retaliate against Hizbollah attacks on settlements in the Galilee. That operation failed miserably and had probably contributed to the downfall of the then Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Politicians and generals are now accepting that the buffer zone and Israel's occupation of south Lebanon had failed to bring security to Israel. But more importantly to us and to the world community, Tuesday's air crash focuses attention on Israel's illegal occupation of Lebanese territory—an occupation that should have ended a long time ago.

Renewed effort on part of the Arabs and the international community should now be directed to drive home the point that Israel's occupation of Lebanon must come to an end. If Israeli politicians see no advantage in keeping their troops there, then they should be encouraged to withdraw those troops.

It is sad that the Middle East peace process has so far failed to create meaningful momentum on the Israeli-Lebanese track. There are many reasons for that. One is the fact that Lebanon is being used by both Israel and Syria to fight a proxy war. But that war must now come to an end. The United States, the main sponsor of the peace process, must come forward and take a stand on this issue.

It has been reported that France has offered to help Israel conclude a unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon. Such an initiative should not be discarded. It would help boost the peace process if Israel was to pull out of Lebanon in accordance with international resolutions. But we know that such a move is also tied to developments on the Syrian-Israeli track.

In recent weeks there have been some positive movements and the two parties have expressed interest in returning to the negotiating table. While the two parties continue to haggle, the issue of Israel's occupation of south Lebanon must not be delayed any longer.

Letters to the Editor

Misery of Sudan

To the Editor

I read Khairi Janbe's article on Sudan with great interest, (The Star, 30 January).

I must say that I do not understand his basic proposition at all.

He was quite correct, however, in pointing out that we should not look to the OAU to solve the problem. By extension, we should not look to the Arab League either. Mr Janbe conveniently left out the source of Sudan's misery: the forced Islamization of the Christian and animist south and the current Sudanese regime's determination to export its brand of radical Islam to its neighbor-

ing states.

The truth is, under the Hassan Turabi's dominated regime Sudan has had very difficult relations with all its neighbors—Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda. There is little doubt now that the current Sudanese regime will fall by the end of this year, if not sooner. What'll become of the post-Turabi/Bashir Sudan is very much up in the air. Former Sudanese Prime Minister Sadiq Al Mahdi, likely to become the next prime minister, now says that a referendum on the fate of southern Sudan has to take place, even though he decides to campaign against it.

Sudan may very well be-

come a unified, multicultural society or just as easily end up splitting into two different republics. Only time will tell. But there is a great lesson here for all the people of the region: religious fanaticism only brings misery and destruction, not to mention the untold loss of life. Having lived in the Sudan as a very young Eritrean refugee, I can attest to the friendly and good-natured character of the Sudanese people. I wish them all the best as they try to find a way out of their present mess and begin the long process of national reconciliation. It can be done.

victor.kflu@funb.com

Living History: A Memoir by Chaim Herzog, New York, Pantheon Books, 448pp \$30.

Reviewed by Allan E. Shapiro

THIS BOOK is best described as presidential—in scope, perspective, and style. Even in passages that are likely to arouse disagreement—for example, the account of the Bus 300-Shin Bet Affair of 1986—the telling of the historical narrative exudes a certain elan.

The book, like the author, has class written all over it. Naturally, attention is focused on the presidential years, as these beyond doubt represent the climax of Herzog's career. If, as Herzog declares, a voyage is a perfect metaphor for life, the presidency of Israel somehow appears throughout the story of his life as the unarticulated and unwavering destination. Yet it would be impossible to appreciate the Herzog presidency without the accumulated experience of the journey that preceded it.

This begins with his youth in Ireland ("while I did not feel an outcast, I did feel different") continues to England ("Being Jewish in Ireland was not our only cultural conflict. Being Irish in England was another"), and goes on to Palestine in 1935, when he was a teenager. Then, military service in the British army in World War II, the meeting with the survivors of the Holocaust, the struggle for Israel's creation, building its military intelligence, serving as spokesman of Israel before and during the Six Day War, and the beginnings of military government in the Occupied Territories.

From the outset, the personal and the historical sagas are intertwined. Without breaking the continuity of the autobiography, Herzog presents a running account of the great episodes of the modern era. Perhaps nowhere is his personal family history more emphasized than in the account of his years as Israel's representative to the United Nations. Herzog's dramatic gesture on the podium of the General Assembly, when he tore up the Zionism is racism resolution passed by that body, had its origins, Herzog relates, in the action of his father, who as chief rabbi of Palestine tore up the British White Paper in

1939 on the steps of the Jeshurun Synagogue in Jerusalem.

In a sense, this is the work of a participant-observer, the role generally associated with the anthropologist, not the statesman. For the political actor, particularly at the summit, the role is almost an impossible one, as the participatory element outweighs the objectivity required of the observer. That Herzog is able to make a go of it—at least most of the time—is a measure of this success.

Herzog does not pull his punches, as when he describes the infighting and bickering between Israel's UN delegation and the Israeli embassy in Washington, which initially discounted the importance of the UN's anti-Zionist resolution. This was the key to the relative lack of reaction by the American Jewish community.

Herzog's comments on the whole gallery of Israel's leaders make up some of the most entertaining passages of the book. If he has a personal hero, it is Shimon Peres, although he does not spare his criticism of many of Peres's devious political dealings. Particularly low marks go to Golda Meir as foreign minister ("not very effective") and as prime minister ("very limited"). Foreign leaders also draw comment: Kissinger, for example ("his brilliance is matched by his ego").

Devoting a chapter to each of his years as president, Herzog gives the most comprehensive description that has ever appeared in print of the workings of what many consider a purely ceremonial office.

However, the brief account of the Shin Bet Affair is less than satisfying. This was not a "national witch-hunt" and it was not only "the left-wing element in the media (that) refused to drop the matter." Nor is this the only inaccuracy. The creation of the Landau Commission on the Shin Bet's interrogation procedures was not a product of Herzog's presidential pardon, but only came later, as a result of the revelations in the Nafisu case. The Landau Commission, as Professor Pri-



Herzog

na Lahav has observed, "implicitly rejected the presumption that the Shin Bet was entitled to be sheltered from the rule of law by virtue of its status as

guardian of the state. It had the courage to denounce moral corruption among those whom the president of Israel, in his pardon message one year earlier, had called 'good people' engaged in sacred work."

The Supreme Court upheld Herzog's authority to pardon, as he states, but it made no determination with regard to the correctness of Herzog's exercise of his presidential discretion, as the swing-judge, Miriam Ben-Porat, subsequently made clear. Nor has the Supreme Court ever determined, as Herzog seems to believe, that the president is authorized to decide that counter-terrorism is above the law. Far more persuasive is Herzog's concluding admonition that "the State of Israel must base its existence on strong foundations if it wishes to live and thrive as a unique, ethical society... above all..."

Jerusalem Post



HEZOG: HEZOG, SPOKESMAN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Letters to the editor: Will be edited for brevity, must contain name and address of sender.

ENGLISH PROGRAM

SATURDAY

- 7:00—Holy Koran
- 7:15—Cartoon
- 7:30—Tilt—Comedy
- 7:40—French program
- 7:50—Peking Opera
- 8:00—I Love Lucy
- 8:10—French Program
- 8:20—New Headlines
- 8:30—Hanging with Cooper
- 8:40—America's Home Videos
- 8:50—Innocent Victims
- 9:00—News at Ten
- 10:00—Yam
- 10:15—Feature Film
- Dances with Wolves

SUNDAY

- 7:00—Holy Koran
- 7:15—Cartoon
- 7:30—Tilt
- 7:40—French Program
- 7:50—I Love Lucy
- 8:00—French Program
- 8:10—New Headlines
- 8:20—Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
- 8:30—America's Home Videos
- 8:40—Innocent Victims
- 8:50—News at Ten
- 9:00—Boston Post
- 9:10—Feature Film
- Entertainment
- 9:30—Cartoon

MONDAY

- 7:00—Holy Koran
- 7:15—Cartoon
- 7:30—Tilt
- 7:40—French Program
- 7:50—I Love Lucy
- 8:00—Feature Film
- 8:10—I Love Lucy

CROSSWORD

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NOTES

Middle East Beat
by Khairi Janbek
Sting in the tail

Business scene

The mid-annual results of the Cairo-Amman Bank generated net profits of JD 5.02 million, showing a decline of 7.4% compared with 1995. The net revenue of interests and commissions during the first half of last year rose by 23.7% to JD12.3 million.

According to the Bank's report, the profits of securities portfolio were JD 794,000 compared with the first half of 1995. Revenues from foreign currencies rose from JD753,000 to JD 1,03 million in the first half of 1996. The total assets of the Bank went up by 3% to reach JD 618.7 million at the Central Bank of Jordan and other banking institutions.

The Arab Bank and the Egyptian Financial Consortium (Hermis) set up a closed investment company in Egypt at a \$60 million capital. Its name is the Arab Investment Corporation Egypt. About 85% of the new company's investments are allocated for expanding operating companies in Egypt and boosting their productive capacity and 15% for foundations. The new venture hopes to achieve 30% profits over the next five years. It is financed by Saudi, Jordanian, Moroccan and Palestinian investors. The Arab Bank's share in the company is 10%. The corporation plans to establish a big investment fund in Egypt at a capital of \$50 million.

Amman Investment Bank, established in 1989, is carrying out a restructuring programme of its finances through the Central Bank. Its programme calls to write off JD 10 million (10 million shares) of its JD 15 million capital. It would then increase this capital to JD 20 million (20 million shares). The Bank's accumulated losses since last June reached JD 34 million as a result of its JD 1.3 million losses during the first half of 1996. Its clients' deposits declined by 32.5% against 1995.

Its budget over the first half of last year dropped by 23% to reach JD 85 million, according to the Bank's financial report. The Bank's balance at the CBJ by the end of last June was JD 5 million compared with JD 17 million in 1995.

Foreign Exchange

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1983	1.2043
DM	0.4540	0.4563
SPF	0.5229	0.5255
FRF	0.1344	0.1351
YEN (100)	0.6134	0.6165
DEL	0.4048	0.4064
LIT (100)	0.0462	0.0462

Aqaba port ready to receive oil-for-food shipments

AMMAN (Star)—Aqaba Port is presently witnessing a noticeable rise in activity as Jordanian shipping agencies are competing to sign contracts for importing cargo to Iraq via the port.

The Minister of Trade and Industry, Ali Abu Ragheb has previously said that Iraq will import 250,000 tons of various commodities via the Aqaba port in the light of the implementation of the "oil-for-food" formula.

Jordanian shipping activity was in recession over the last

six years of embargo imposed on Iraq by the United Nations. A large imports ratio was covered by the Iraqi market through Jordanian shipping agents before 1990.

However, driven by hopes to revive the movement to its previous levels, the Aqaba port is busy preparing to receive the first shipments imported for Iraq due in the middle of this month.

Wheat shipments that have been imported by Jordanian shipping agents are expected to arrive at Aqaba on 15 January

where they will be carried via trucks to Iraq.

The director of the Ports Corp., Muhammad Al Dalabeh said that the Aqaba port is ready to handle commodities imported to Iraq.

New equipment have been bought to enhance the port's capacity to deal with grain shipments as fast as possible. The port is competent to face any extraordinary increase in the cargo movement.

The average capacity of wheat vessels that will arrive at Aqaba is approximately 50,000 tons. The capacity of the Iraqi Um Qasr port does not exceed 25,000 tons, while Aqaba can receive 20 million tons.

There are 52 active shipping agencies in Jordan and they are seeking to obtain contracts to transport and import cargo designed for the Iraqi market and at competitive delivery rates.

Talal Al Halawani, director of the Maritime Shipping Agency said "we are negotiating with Iraqi importers to conclude purchases for Iraq from outside countries. However, the delivery system should be up to modern standards together with making further reductions in delivery fees at the port, he added.

This demand is cited by another shipping agent who also called for reduction of charges. Moreover, he said Iraqi importers must have more



The Aqaba port looks forward to a bright future

facilities to encourage them to use Aqaba in the light of the competition from Turkish ports. Delivery fees at Turkish ports are lower and also are nearer to Iraq, he argued.

Although Jordanian shipping agents have received contracts to import thousands of tons of foodstuffs and basic needs for Iraq, these are still under negotiation.

Al Halawani is optimistic that the oil-for-food deal will end the worst era of recession at Aqaba. However, he added that the port is in need of further modernization. He said there is a need, for instance, for electronic cranes to discharge and load containers.

Aqaba has become a vital port for re-exporting containers transported in favor of interna-

tional companies, among them are the Maersk International Shipping Lines. Al Halawani said.

After the latest reduction in the delivery charges at the Aqaba port, it has become the most competitive among neighboring ports due to its low cost and quality service.

In a bid to revive the export movement at Aqaba and encourage Jordanian manufacturers and importers, the Ports Corp. seeks cabinet approval to cut fees imposed on exporting Jordanian products via Aqaba by 50 percent. Al Dalabeh said.

The revenues of the corporation during last year reached JD 44.4 million compared with JD 43.9 million in 1995. ■

Jordan-Israeli gas project flops

THE LIQUEFIED natural gas project that was supposed to supply Jordan and Israel with Qatari gas by the year 2001 has been cancelled.

The project which was sponsored by the American giant "Anron" at Aqaba port was concluded at the Amman Economic Summit (MENA 1) two years ago. Back then people were very optimistic that the project would go ahead.

However, it is understood that the project is being called off by the present Israeli government. This is despite the fact that Israel would benefit the most according to the Minister of Energy, Hashim Al Dabbas.

Jordanian investors attributed the cancellation to political and economic reasons. Israel is basically looking for lower costs. Importing gas from Egypt would be far lower than from Qatar.

But it is also argued that Israel's hardline Likud government is not too keen on the project or any plans for future cooperation as evidenced by her foot-dragging on the peace process. This is according to Jordanian businessmen.

The memorandum of understanding signed between Jordan and the Anron company has become invalid since 180 days elapsed without commencing on the project, Al Dabbas added.

Under the deal Israel would receive 75% of gas while Jordan would get the remainder. ■

Goldstar's joins the ISO9002 league

GOLDSTAR, THE leading electrical manufacturers in Jordan, has become internationally recognized for offering top quality products at competitive prices.

Being ISO9002 certified, Goldstar meets all right qualifications and stresses its ability to monitor all production levels, according to Wasif Azar, member of the board of directors of Goldstar and vice chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industry.

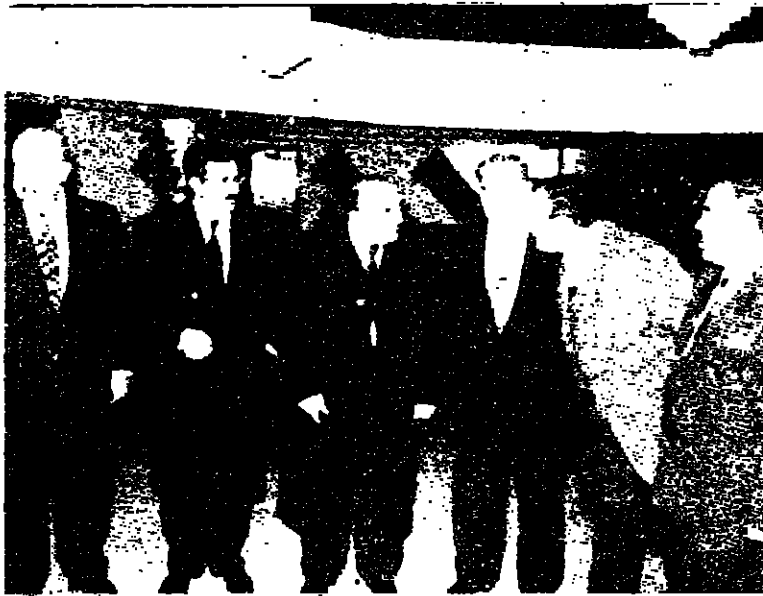
Goldstar was among the leading Jordanian companies to become ISO9002 certified. This is helped by the fact that the economic policy in this country seeks to encourage manufacturers to develop their products and embark on strategies to enhance the export performance of their services available for customers, whether locally or worldwide, Azar added.

As with the international tendency, the name of the game is quality at a high standard as a basic prerequisite for the products and services that are offered.

These specifications are aimed at winning the confidence of buyers and clients and to enable them to enter new international markets.

There are about 20 industrial and service companies in Jordan that now have the ISO9000 certificates.

The chairman of the board at Goldstar, Mustafa Al Khalili said that the company's



products follow the latest developments in the electronic and electrical industry.

Iraqi oil exports rise to 11.5 million barrels

SINCE THE oil-for-food deal began to be implemented Iraqi oil exports totalled 11.5 million tons, according to the Iraqi news agency.

Iraq has managed to sign 26 crude oil purchase contracts since the United Nations approved the implementation of the oil-for-food formula. This formula allows Iraq to export oil shipments worth \$2 billion every six months to get in return its basic needs of foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals.

The UN has lately approved the first two contracts to provide Iraq with wheat and rice from Australia and Thailand.

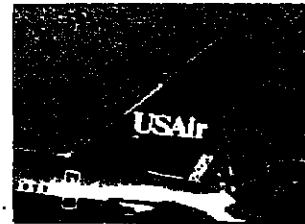
The Iraqi oil marketing company (Somo) expects to export 11 new shipments via Turkish ports during February covering 9.5 million

barrels per day compared with 11 million barrels daily during last January. Among these shipments 160,000 barrels are reported daily to European oil companies, while 70,000 barrels will stay in Turkey to be refined by Tobbasi, a Turkish oil concern.

According to import deals signed with the Iraqi government, 50 percent of oil contracts are in favor of US and Europe companies, and other quantities will be sold at the spot market.

Iraqi crude oil production reached 1.019 million barrels/day in December due to resumption of exports that stopped for six years. The first oil shipment was exported via Turkey port last December, and the Iraqi oil exports are estimated at 600,000 barrels/day. ■

USAir seeks greater competition



THREE BRITISH Airways directors have resigned from the USAir board.

Officials say the resignation clears another obstacle in USAir's path toward becoming an effective competitor in the US-UK market.

In its lawsuit against British Airways and in its regulatory filings, USAir said consistently that it must be free of entanglement. This is one of the steps necessary to enable USAir to provide competitive balance to the proposed alliance between the British carrier and American Airlines.

In response, British Airways now has said that it intends to sell its USAir stock and that its representatives have resigned from the USAir board. But competition is not yet assured. USAir will continue its drive to obtain the necessary routes, slots and ground facilities to compete between its international gateways at Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Charlotte and Boston and London's Heathrow airport.

USAir also said it will continue to pursue its lawsuit against British Airways and American Airlines pending in federal district court in New York. In the suit, USAir said British Airways has breached its contract with USAir and that BA and American Airlines have violated antitrust laws. ■

Business Chronicle

Challenges put Iraq on threshold of new confrontation with opponents

IN VIEW of the latest media campaign launched by American and Kuwaiti officials against Iraq, the country may face a new era of escalation with its opponents.

The two sides have not stopped accusing Iraq of owning mass destruction weapons and preparing for a new aggression on Kuwait.

Despite the fact that the Iraqi government denies any wish to attack Kuwait, American officials stress that such a step can occur anytime as long as Saddam Hussein remains in office.



If we examine such claims, it can be concluded that the US is following this strategy either to continue to remind Kuwait of the Iraqi "threatening nightmare" or as an excuse to make the former buy weapons from the US in the name of protecting them against a possible Iraqi invasion.

When the oil-for-food deal was implemented last December, Iraq accepted the formula to put an end to the sufferings of its people and to rebuild its economy.

Such deal does not satisfy the demands of Iraq, but it approved it because it saw it as a step for the complete lifting of UN sanctions.

Iraq was involved in two wars then suffered from six years of embargo that cost its economy an accumulated debt burden of about \$60 billion.

Though official statistics are not available about the Iraqi economy, western sources indicate that its Gross National Product (GNP) has declined five folds since the Gulf war. It went down sharply from \$60 billion in 1989 to only \$12 billion at present.

Moreover, the noticeable rise in inflation has badly effected the middle class which forms one third of the population.

Before the war, the Iraqi dinar was valued at \$3, today one dollar equals 1200 dinars.

Iraq also lost oil revenues estimated at \$150 billion, and according to the oil-for-food deal it is not allowed to export oil valued at more than \$2 billion every six months, while its export capacities are much more than that.

The Iraqi industrial sector faces major difficulties because of the lack of spare parts.

To avoid the burden of debt, officials in international organizations anticipate that Iraq has to be subjected to the supervision of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) if it is seeking to reschedule its debts.

Iraq has to follow a strict policy to set an economic restructuring program, liberalize prices and stop subsidy. These are the requirements of the new world economy, in effect privatize all governmental institutions.

However, Iraq faces many challenges especially those linked to media campaigns stressing that the country is planning for a military action while it is merely seeking to rebuild its economy and re-establish good relations with the world particularly its neighbors. ■

Tourism booms despite political setbacks

TOURIST REVENUES during the first five months of last year increased by 17 percent. However, due to political setbacks in the peace process total figures for 1996 increased by only 2.8 percent compared to 1995.

There were about one million tourists in 1996 and the revenues during the year went up by 10 percent to reach JD 770 million. This equals one billion dollars.

Investments in the tourism sector in Jordan reached \$500 million since 1994 whom the peace agreement was signed between Jordan and Israel. The biggest part of these investments focused on Petra, Aqaba and the Dead Sea. ■

Jordan to sign oil deal

THE AMERICAN-based Hooper Energy and Medaleon Exploration oil companies are negotiating with Jordanian officials to hold oil excavations in Al Sarhan area. It covers 5000 square meters near the border with Saudi Arabia.

The Director of the National Resources Authority, Khalid Al Shayab said that the Jordanian officials and the two companies have primarily agreed on a partnership agreement in producing oil and natural gas.

This oil concession contract will be signed soon. Another American firm, "Anadarcro Petroleum and Trans-Global Resources," which have signed an oil contract with Jordan last year plans to develop their concessions. Trans-Global holds an eight-year excavation concession in the Dead Sea and Wadi Araba, while Anadarcro spends \$20 million to explore an average of 17,000 kilometers in the north-eastern part of Jordan. ■

MARKET WATCH

1-4 February

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Financial Investment 1.55 Naymat Munka and Dine 3.70 JIMCO 3.70 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JIMCO 3.57 Union Bank 2.16 General Storage & Trade 2.04 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Phosphate Mines 3.98 Jordan Int'l Trade Center 3.23 Arab Amman Industry 2.27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hamah Mineral 5.70 Jordan Int'l Trade Bank 3.17 Philadelpia Bank 2.46
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anasirah 5.00 Philadelpia Bank 4.62 Middle East Complex 4.48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Tourism & Transportation 4.69 National Storage House 3.90 Philadelpia Bank 2.23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Tourism & Transportation 4.92 JIMCO 3.45 Banwa 2.99 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Food Industries 4.01 JIMCO 3.57 Arab Amman Industry 2.78
General Price Pointer	153,280	153,240	153,770
Trade Volume	1038301	539963	2503427
Stock Volume	700988	450982	638542
Highest Traded Stocks			
Tourism and Hotels	292694	Livestock and Poultry	85875
		Jordan Tourism & Transportation	1885000
		Cement Factories	93540

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646808 Fax: 646499

LURIE'S WORLD



The new, improved 1997 model

Palestine Post

Palestine Stock exchange starts dealings soon

■ Palestinian investors are preparing to start their dealings on the recently established Palestine Stock exchange in Nablus next week.

The market value of the shareholding companies on the exchange is estimated at more than \$700 million, according to the director of the market, Safwan Al Batayneh.

He expects investments on the market to be high in the light of the available liquidity in the Palestinian banking sector and the contributions of the Palestinian external capital that is estimated at \$5.8 billion.

The stock market is currently organizing intensive training courses for cadres in brokerage companies at the headquarters of the market. The aim is to make them fully qualified in using the dealing system.

Brokerage concerns that wish to become members in the stock market has to be familiar with six areas. These include: share trading, brokerage, issuance of bonds, portfolios and other investment activities.

The paid-up capital of brokerage companies in the market should not be less than one million dollar. Other additional funds may be needed to cover primary issues. This will be the responsibility of the securities authority which will be established in accordance with the securities law which is being studied by the PNA in corporation with international corporations.

Al Batayneh continued to say that there are 60 shareholding companies enlisted in the stock market and they are asked to provide a full fiscal data of their activities for the administration of the exchange.

The paid-up capital of these concerns should be 50 percent of its capital and it has to be a general shareholding company with a capital of half million dinars.

This operational capital must be sufficient according to the market estimates.

The number of shareholders in these concerns has to be 250 or more. 25 percent of their shares must be owned by shareholders who are not considered founders or related to the company's administration.

Among other conditions to be available is the high competence and expertise of the administration and the fact that shareholders rights should not be lower than 50 percent of the capital. Al Batayneh said.

The door is open for Palestinian companies to be enlisted together with Arab and foreign concerns that meet the listing conditions.

The Palestine stock exchange is one of the leading markets in the Arab world to be owned by the private sector and it follows a developed electronic system that includes modernized centers for deposit and exchange in the region. Al Batayneh added.

The deposit and exchange center holds settlement of transactions related to trading in securities and transferring ownership electronically with no need for a manual process.

Al Batayneh pointed that joining the brokerage field in the Palestine stock exchange requires high levels of competence and services to be provided for investors as well as certain measures to monitor share trading operations and organize the relations between clients and investors in general.

Europeans reconsider Algeria policies

By Charles Trueheart

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

PARIS—A particularly savage wave of killings in Algeria and the government's refusal to negotiate with Islamic insurgents have pushed the North African nation's long-ignored civil conflict onto the political agenda in Europe.

The government of France, Algeria's former colonial master and home to Algeria's largest exile community, has maintained a steady detachment as the death toll has pushed past 50,000 in the underground war that Muslim extremists have been waging against the army-backed government in Algiers for the last five years.

Other Western powers, including the United States, have followed France's lead—and the Algerian government's preference—by treating the troubles as an internal matter.

But the bombings, massacres and assassinations that have flared since the start of Ramadan three weeks ago coupled with the Algerian government's unbending determination to "eradicate" terrorists and reject political dialogue, have generated the first signs that European leaders may be rethinking their attitudes.

"France must lift the taboo," French Socialist Party leader Lionel Jospin declared. "It can neither remain silent nor leave the impression of unconditional support for the Algerian government."

"Are we going to let these people continue to kill each other? Do we really have nothing to do with it?" asked Nicole Notat, the head of a powerful French union, after attending the funeral Thursday of Abdolkhak Benhamouda, a popular Algerian labor leader gunned down in Algiers two days earlier.

Algeria is a "sovereign nation," replied French Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette in a newspaper report published last Friday. "I'm not responsible for Algeria's destiny, but ... to do what I can for the security of French people."

De Charette was referring to the element of the Algerian situation that France cares most deeply about: terrorist bombings in Paris that have been linked by French authorities to Algerian insurgents upset at France's support for the government in Algiers.

Those domestic-security concerns, analysts and critics say, are behind France's studied forbearance regarding the Algerian regime. So are its economic interests in Algeria's southern oil and natural gas fields. So are its serious immigration problems with hundreds of thousands of Algerians ferrying back and forth across the Mediterranean—and fears of a one-way exodus toward France should the generals lose power to the insurgents.

To those present dangers are added bitter memories. The end of France's colonial experience in Algeria 35 years ago was the darkest chapter in its post-war history, often compared to the United States' in Vietnam.

Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini said last week that his country also wishes to become "active" in resolving Algeria's troubles. Another senior Italian diplomat said that the European Union "has to assume a more determined role" in "developing an initiative which restores rights, freedom and democracy" in Algeria.

Algerian opponents of the regime and concerned French onlookers were particularly dejected by a rare speech given recently by President Liamine Zeroual. In it, he blamed the violence on unnamed foreign plotters and vowed to crush the Islamic guerrillas terrorizing and murdering Algerian citizens—including more than 300 in the last three weeks.

The government's arming of anti-terrorist civilian militias has set off waves of counter-violence, some of it no less ruthless than that attributed to Muslim extremists.

Zeroual, a former general elected in 1995 and backed by Algeria's military elites, has twice postponed legislative elections now promised for next spring. His failure to say anything in his televised address about who might participate in the elections, or even whether they will be held, also quickened the disquiet in France and elsewhere about the deteriorating situation in Algeria.



Zeroual: blaming violence on unnamed foreign plotters

Democracy has loose foothold in Pakistan's election

By Kenneth J. Cooper
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan—It took more than two decades for Pakistan to hold its first free election and almost another two for national votes to become the standard way to transfer political power. Other habits of democracy, however, have yet to take hold.

"The problem is not elections. The problem is what happens between

elections," said Peter Manikas, a senior consultant to the National Democratic Institute, which has monitored several Pakistani elections.

Four national votes in the past eight years, pitting two competitive political parties against each other, have not increased government accountability—and may have actually brought an increase in corruption. The country's courts, which are only partly independent from political influence, have not been trusted to even-handedly probe official wrongdoing, leaving corruption investigations to temporary, ineffective tribunals.



Bhutto bows to the inevitable and concedes defeat

Opposition parties in parliament have been single-mindedly devoted to ousting the government, which they have succeeded in doing four times since 1988 through similar dismissal orders authored by indirectly elected presidents.

Behind it all looms the military, which has ruled Pakistan for half its 50-year history and remains a stabilizing but secretive power. Public memory of martial law, which ended a decade ago, continues to stifle

free expression.

The problems of Pakistan's democracy are so manifold that a Council on Foreign Relations panel in the US recently warned the developing nation of 130 million "may turn into a failed state" if its elites do not change course.

The leader with the best opportunity to solidify Pakistan's democracy is presumptive prime minister Nawaz Sharif, 47, whose Pakistan Muslim League won an unprecedented two-thirds majority in Monday's parliamentary elections. He won 128 seats of the 217-seat National Assembly.

Sharif, who also was prime minister from 1990 to 1993, will face a small, disjointed opposition possibly led by the Pakistan People's Party of ousted prime minister Benazir Bhutto, which captured about 20 seats.

"Benazir Bhutto has totally destroyed our economy, so we'll have to bring in very bold reforms," Sharif said Tuesday. "Since we have an overwhelming majority, we are preparing a fresh agenda."

Sharif also has promised to break a pattern of Pakistan's leaders using courts and investigative agencies to exact revenge against political opponents. He did it to Bhutto's family after she was dismissed from office and he succeeded her in 1990. She did it to Sharif's family after his resignation brought her back to power in 1993.

"We are not going to indulge in any politics of revenge. It will be clean, good politics, and we'll try to seek her cooperation to take the country forward," Sharif said in Lahore, his home town and the capital of Punjab province.

Bhutto, despite charging that the



Sharif, Pakistan's new prime minister, promises a new era

election was rigged, congratulated Sharif last Tuesday and said she would not try to destabilize the new government. Her party would not have the strength to undermine Sharif in parliament anyway, and her popularity has fallen so much that she would have difficulty staging street protests of any size.

"The country needs political stability. Our people need economic relief. The two go hand in hand," Bhutto said.

The apparent cease-fire between the two longtime rivals could face an immediate test. Ethics legislation barring winning candidates from taking their seats if they have defaulted on loans from government-owned banks or violated campaign spending limits has been used in the past to pursue political vengeance, and several candidates are known to be in default.

In her post-election news confer-

ence, Bhutto indicated she would try to achieve out of power what critics have maintained she could not do in office: secure a strong democracy in Pakistan. She led a crusade for democracy that resulted in the restoration of free elections in 1988, but both governments she has led since then have been dismissed on presidential orders.

Bhutto suggested how Sharif might use his large majority to strengthen democracy: repeal the 1985 constitutional amendment that empowers a president to dismiss governments and establish an independent election commission.

International election observers have not supported Bhutto's charges of election rigging. Observers from both the European Union and Commonwealth nations pronounced the voting to have been generally fair and free.

Pending extradition of Marzook prompts Hamas to issue new threats

By Barton Gelfman
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

JERUSALEM—The decision by a senior Hamas leader to drop his fight against extradition from the United States to Israel prompted warnings last Thursday that the militant Islamic group could resume bombings in Israel and possibly include Americans among its

targets. The impending transfer and trial of Mousa Abu Marzook, accused by Israel of terrorist conspiracy and inciting murder, already has provided a new rallying point for his Islamic Resistance Movement, known as Hamas. Battered by a joint Israeli-Palestinian crackdown and passive for nearly a year, the organization issued new threats against Israel and,

implicitly, against "all the Americans who have interests in the Arab and Muslim world."

In a bulletin directed for "widest possible dissemination," the State Department announced last week that its diplomats "are taking appropriate security precautions," and it advised American citizens abroad "to exercise greater than usual caution in their

activities."

"Although the Department of State has no specific information regarding threats against Americans, and Hamas has no prior history of targeting US citizens or facilities, we cannot discount the possibility of random acts of anti-American violence," the bulletin said.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, according to an aide, asked the Clinton administration not to extradite Abu Marzook, an acknowledged political leader of Hamas who says he had no role in its military operations. Nabil Abu Irdineh, the Arafat aide who disclosed the request, declined to elaborate.

Arafat has asked in the past that Abu Marzook be transferred to an area under Palestinian self-rule, where Arafat has tried with some success to co-opt relative moderates in Hamas and to crush die-hard proponents of terror.

Palestinian legislator Marwan Kanafani, a sometime Arafat spokesman, told the Reuters news agency that the United States will be "committing a grave mistake" if it hands over Abu Marzook. "The American government must give Abu Marzook the right to return to his country or to go to any



Marzook

other place he chooses, especially since he had not been accused of any violations under American law," Kanafani said.

Operating most commonly under the auspices of Izzadin Kassam, its guerrilla wing, Hamas is principally responsible for a three-year series of suicide attacks that killed scores of civilians and soldiers in Israel and the Gaza Strip.

Marzook, 46, who was born in Gaza's Shati Refugee Camp and lived in Northern Virginia for 15 years, was arrested at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport in July 1995 after US authorities placed him on a watch list. Soon after, Israel requested his extradition on charges, never made public in detail, that he

helped finance and plan attacks on Israel.

Abu Marzook's lawyers, in court pleadings, contended that the charges were "based on a far-fetched theory of conspiracy," but US District Judge Kevin Duffy ruled last May that "there is more than sufficient evidence to show" he "was a member of the conspiracy known as Hamas" and that he could be extradited to Israel.

Abu Marzook dropped his appeal against extradition last Wednesday, saying there was no way he could get fair treatment in an American court. Israel's extradition request still stands, but there are signs that the Israeli government is less than overjoyed at Abu Marzook's decision. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who cultivated a reputation as a counter-terrorist, has been silent on the case, and Israeli press reports suggest there are doubts about the evidence on which the extradition request was based.

The Hamas leaflet, made public Wednesday, warned the United States "that it will bear the whole responsibility of the status of unrest which will emerge as a result" of turning Abu Marzook over to Israel. Abu Marzook's brother, Mahmoud, a brigadier general in Arafat's police force who is not a Hamas sympathizer, predicted Hamas will carry out more attacks if the extradition takes place.

Reform Jews dispute Israeli orthodox religious control

By Marjorie Miller
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

JERUSALEM—The American rabbis embraced new converts to Judaism, and they held a prayer service at the Old City's Western Wall. The 50 religious leaders even sat down with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last Sunday.

It would seem to be the perfect visit to Israel, except the rabbis are Reform Jews: The conversions they perform are not recognized by Israel's highest religious authority and their prayers for equality have yet to be answered by the Jewish state.

On the contrary. The leaders of the Association of Reform Zionists of America met with Netanyahu to oppose his government's move in the opposite

direction—toward legislation that would for the first time explicitly ban all non-Orthodox rabbis from performing marriages, burials and conversions in Israel.

In fact, Orthodox rabbis have held a monopoly over these rites since the founding of Israel in 1948. The Orthodox rabbinate does not recognize those performed by Reform and Conservative rabbis.

Reform leaders told Netanyahu they want to see liberalization, not legislation for the 21st century that would define them as "second-class Jews."

"We expect the government of Israel to oppose legislation whose purpose and effect would be to split world Jewry," said Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, director of the Reform movement's umbrella organization. "The government should not be

involved in codifying second-class status for non-Orthodox Jews."

The issue goes to the heart of Diaspora-Israel relations, and it is a hot potato for Netanyahu, who is caught between the demands of millions of Jews abroad and those of ultra-Orthodox members of his own religious-right coalition.

At root is the fundamental question of "Who is a Jew?" That is to say, who is recognized by the Jewish state and, therefore, is entitled to automatic citizenship. Also at issue is who is doing the recognizing.

Reform and Conservative Jews say the Orthodox should not be the exclusive voice of Judaism in Israel or the only heirs to Jewish traditions. They say the Orthodox try to impose their religious views on all Jews and turn away anyone who

does not agree with them.

The Orthodox rabbinate, Israel's only religious authority, sees itself as the caretakers of thousands of years of Jewish tradition. They see Reform and Conservative Jews as agents of assimilation, representatives of a watered-down Judaism that, ultimately, is not Judaism at all.

The rabbinate does not recognize Reform and Conservative conversions performed in Israel or abroad, although such conversions done abroad are accepted by the Interior Ministry. Thus, Reform and Conservative converts may immigrate to Israel, but Israel's Orthodox rabbis will not marry or bury them in a country where there are no civil ceremonies.

The rabbinate also has prohibited Reform and Conservative rabbis from performing marriages, burials or conver-

sions in Israel. But last year, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that there was nothing in Israeli law to prevent non-Orthodox rabbis from performing such ceremonies and urged the government to define the law.

On Friday, the Cabinet began discussing a draft law prepared by the Justice Ministry that would legalize the de facto status quo: Marriage, divorce and conversion would remain the exclusive domain of the Orthodox in Israel. The status of conversions abroad would remain untouched.

"We never proposed that non-Orthodox conversions performed abroad would not be recognized in Israel," said Deputy Health Minister Shlomo Benizri of the religious Shas party. "That is our ambition, but not our proposal."

Nonetheless, religious Cabi-

net members argued that the new law did not go far enough to prevent quick conversions abroad for people who live in Israel or intend to do so.

They claim that, for example, Russian immigrants and foreign workers who want citizenship can fly to London for a day to be converted by a Reform rabbi, or even receive one by fax from abroad.

At least one of the religious parties, which have 23 seats in the 120-member parliament, or Knesset, has threatened to pull out of Netanyahu's coalition—and bring down the government—if the prime minister cedes any ground to Reform Jews.

The American Reform leaders, meanwhile, drove home the point to Netanyahu that American Jews—the vast majority of whom are Reform or Conservative—are the ones who lobby Congress for \$3 billion a year in aid to Israel.

"If you have the Jewish state sending the message that you (Reform Jews) are not exactly equal here ... if you say, 'Continue lobbying for us, continue your tourism, but don't bring us your religious sensibilities,'" said Hirsch, "well, it doesn't take much for Jews to disengage."

Staging a Hitler love story

By William Drozdiak
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

BERLIN—The setting is Hitler's bunker in April 1945. Outside, the Third Reich is going down in flames as the Allies press their final siege against the heart of the Nazi empire. But inside, a curious calm has settled over the dictator's subterranean abode in the



hours before his death. A platinum blonde has just married the man who exterminated 6 million Jews and nearly destroyed the entire continent. In the short interlude between their wedding and joint suicide, she rhapsodizes about her love for clothes, gourmet meals and the leader who has captivated her ever since they met 16 years earlier at a photographer's studio in Munich.

She reminisces with girlish embarrassment about her first sexual encounter on a sofa with the man she affectionately calls "the Wolf." She pushes aside all dark thoughts about him, enthralled by the dream that when Germany wins the war she will get to star in a Hollywood epic about her life with Hitler—to be played by none other than Clark Gable.

One of the last political taboos has just fallen in the realm of German entertainment—but the event has not been cause for much satisfaction. "Eva—Hitler's Beloved" presents the most sympathetic portrayal ever given on a German stage of Eva Braun, Adolf Hitler's mistress and de facto first lady of the Nazi regime.

Since opening in December, it has become one of the most controversial productions in the history of the Berliner Ensemble, the famous theater group founded in 1949 by Bertolt Brecht with the expressed goal of disrupting bourgeois society. And in the process, the 90-minute monologue starring Corinne Harfouch, one of Germany's hottest actresses, has antagonized just about everybody.

Feminist groups have been outraged by the suggestion that Braun and her mundane tastes represent the embodiment of German womanhood. But writer Stefan Kolditz and director Stephan Suschke, who conducted exhaustive historical research on their subject, say all they were trying to do was project a faithful image of a simple woman who stood loyally by the side of one of history's cruelest oppressors.

They contend that Braun, like many Germans at the time, insisted she never knew about Hitler's heinous crimes and sought to avoid all occasions to know about them. She spent long stretches at their Bavarian mountain retreat, watching films and indulging in material obsessions such as building a vast wardrobe of fancy clothes and expensive shoes. She saw Hitler once or twice a month, but displayed no apparent interest in his politics, and never voiced doubts about his policies.

Braun's driving ambition to reach stardom in Hollywood is



The Berlin bunker, the final place where Hitler died

based on fact, according to Kolditz, who pored over historical archives, private papers and documentary films in studying her life. "Her career goal was to become an actress and we know that Hitler promised that if he won the war, she would get to travel to Hollywood to play herself in the film about his life," he said.

Suschke acknowledged that the play is "very politically incorrect." He insists, however, that his intention was not to impugn the motives or habits of German women, whether or not they are too inclined to show slavish obedience to the men in their lives.

Rather, he wanted to hold a mirror to the audience and make all Germans question whether they would have acted differently than Braun in demonstrating revulsion toward the crimes of the Nazi leadership. "The point was to make the audience sym-

pathize with her so they would not find it so easy to distance themselves from her," he said.

But German theater critics have been anything but sympathetic toward the play. "Do we really need conjecture today about the emotional life of a woman who had no importance except as the girlfriend of a mass murderer?" asked a reviewer from Berlin's leading radio station. "The play is basically banal and fundamentally tasteless." The local daily *Berliner Morgenpost* said: "The monologue is neither funny nor startling, illuminating nor irritating. It doesn't even attempt to show the indefinable figure behind the stuffed bra or the real story behind the doomed bunker."

Team finds Frankincense trail amid archeological treasure trove

By Thomas H. Maugh II
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

A THREE-week reconnaissance mission through a previously unexplored region of gullies and goat paths in eastern Yemen has yielded an unprecedented wealth of archeological finds, according to the Los Angeles-based team of archeologists.

The team reports it has proved the existence of an ancient frankincense trail from the recently discovered city of Ubar in Oman to the Middle East. Frankincense is believed by many to be the first substance to be traded worldwide and was a key part of the Middle East economy 2,500 years ago. The identification of an overland trade route for frankincense, experts say, is on a par with the discovery of the more recent and much better known silk route to the Orient.

Proof of the route's existence was found during the discovery of a treasure trove of more than 65 separate archeological sites. Two of the most important findings were a pair of ancient fortresses virtually identical to the one the team had previously uncovered at Ubar. These stone caravansaries guarded portions of the route used by camel caravans to transport the valuable spice from the forbidding land of its origin to the centers of civilization.

They also found more than 30 "triliths," complex stone road markers that guided the frankincense merchants through the uncharted wastes of this arid land—solid proof that an overland trail existed.

The team uncovered a broad variety of other artifacts, including a Stonehenge-like circle of massive stones. Bronze Age tombs and, extending much further back into prehistory, evidence of habitation by the earliest human beings.

"To think that, in 1997, there

is a place that is unexplored, that we could find 65 major sites in three weeks without lifting a shovel, is astonishing," said amateur archeologist and lawyer George R. Hedges, who organized the expedition. "I can't imagine that no one has explored this area before. The richness is just extraordinary."

"Boy, was it spectacular!" added archeologist Juris Zarins of Southwest Missouri State University, who was part of the team. Following up on the discoveries, he added, could keep him and a dozen other archeologists busy for the rest of their lives.

Frankincense is the dried resin of a scraggly shrub that grows well only in the Qara Mountains of Oman on the edge of the desolate Rub' al Khali, or Empty Quarter. It was more valuable than gold to early civilizations because of its use in religious ceremonies, the consecration of temples, the manufacture of cosmetics and the treatment of illnesses.

The researchers discovered the fabled lost city of Ubar, the center of the frankincense trade, five years ago in Landsat satellite imagery processed by geologist Ronald G. Blom of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif.

The question then became how the frankincense got to the Middle East. It was clear that some was shipped by boat, but the team has always believed the Ubarites used an overland route as well.

Common sense and Blom's satellite images gave them a good idea where to look for an overland route. So they set out at the beginning of 1997 in four sport utility vehicles.

Maps of the region proved worthless, so they tracked their progress with satellite imagery and the Global Positioning System.

"It was a rough trip," Blom said. Many of the sites they found were known to locals, but not

to the outside world. A police colonel in Sayhut, where they first ventured into uncharted territory, told them about an "old fort" up a wadi outside town. The fort, Ghaydah al Kabir, was "a spitting image" of the fortress at Ubar, Zarins said, and pottery fragments there were identical to those found earlier. The team spent only a few hours there "because the identification was so immediate," Hedges said.

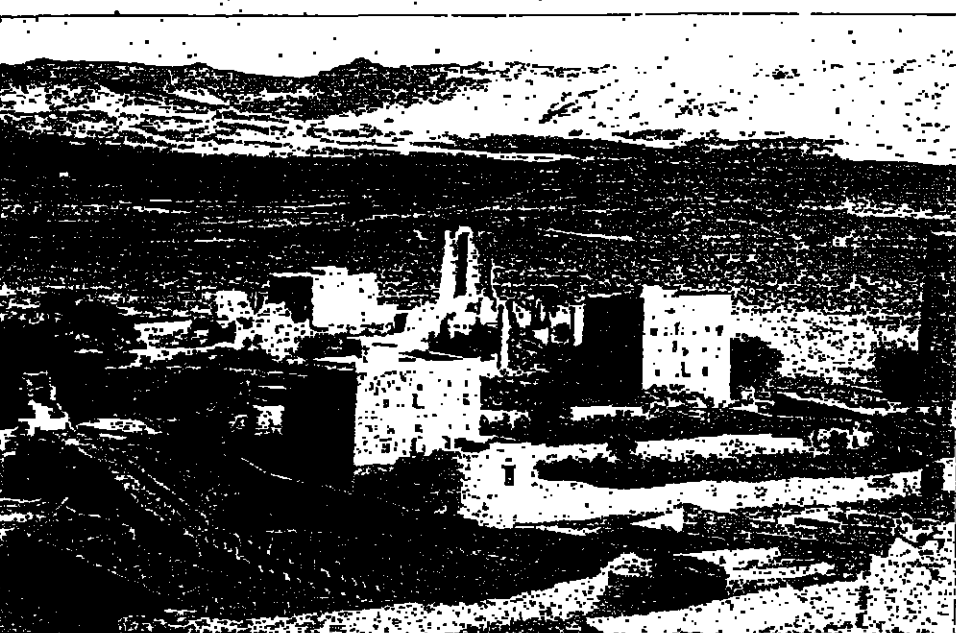
"Here, (240 to 300 miles) from Ubar were the identical people," Hedges added. "It immediately proved our thesis" that there was a land route and that the Ubarites controlled a large section of Eastern Yemen, he said.

Also, just up the coast from Sayhut—past groups of sardine fishermen using boats lashed together by hand in the same fashion they were 2,000 years ago—the team found evidence of a coastal city. The ruins, called Kidmet Enrob, contained porcelains from China and

stoneware from as far away as Vietnam, indicating that trade was far-ranging, even at the very earliest periods of the Ubarite society.

Traveling further north, they encountered a field of boulders bearing ancient pictographs scratched into their patina. The pictographs, similar to ones found earlier at Ubar, included men with the characteristic Arabian "djambia" (dagger) and primitive boats—further evidence of the Ubarites' passage.

All through the trip, the team—which also included botanist Noramella Barbosa of the Huntington Botanical Gardens in Pasadena—came across characteristic triliths, assemblages of three stones, each three to five feet high, on a stone platform. Nestled nearby each platform were rings filled with small stones. The team believes the triliths were erected to show the direction, and perhaps the distance, and time of travel, to the next stop on the frankincense trail.



Yemen is a place to be explored for its rich archaeological treasures

A view from America Privileged? be above the law

By Carrie Nelle Moye
US Star correspondent

THE FIRST time I vividly remember it happening was in a large US city in the 1970s. I had driven to a major post office, children in tow, when I saw a woman whip into a parking space clearly marked for the handicapped. Her car bore no such designation either outside or inside. As she fairly bounded out of her automobile, I said to her, "Ma'am, you really should not park in a place reserved for the handicapped when obviously you have no physical problem."

She retorted, "Well! It is none of your business." My reply: "Of course it is. This post office parking lot is paid for with my tax money and it is up to each of us to help see that the handicapped suffer no abuse on public property by selfish or lazy persons."

She huffed haughtily, marching into the post office. I tried to explain to my children why it was important for them to take a stand on issues that could directly affect others. Whether they were just embarrassed or whether they learned a lesson, I do not know. Since that time there has been much said and done on behalf of the physically challenged and their coveted parking slots. Each of us has seen news reports of "handicap patrols," where persons in wheelchairs have cruised shopping mall parking lots stopping persons parked illegally and asking said violators to be more considerate of those for whom the spaces are reserved.

Granted, it is most tempting to avail one's self of a convenient spot to park that will save a few hundred steps in inclement weather. But at what cost? Perhaps in the scheme of life, a parking space is a minor matter. But is it? What does the usurpation of something clearly

intended (both legally and ethically) to make life a bit more manageable for one who needs assistance say about the person who brazenly claims it? Perhaps, on occasion, an able individual has a unique need to infringe on another's turf; obviously there always are exceptions.

But the question comes as to just how much more often such action is indicative of a selfish person who feels s/he and her needs take precedence over all others. Isn't it more indicative of a character flaw than it is a commission of an illegal act?

This question came to mind recently when a woman attending a large social function at which parking was a premium loudly and with an air of satisfaction noted to several present that she had managed to get a superb parking space. She continued that a friend, whom she named, had loaned her the friend's handicap parking permit. Yes, there had been a reason as earlier she had occasion to use it legitimately due to some transporting of others. Yet after completing her mission, she smugly took advantage of her new-found good fortune and managed to save a walk several hundred feet up a hill. And oh, she was proud of her accomplishment!

True, the woman had committed no major offense—unless a person who eminently qualified for such a space was unable to find one. There were a number of wheel-chair bound persons in attendance, in addition to those with a variety of other problems. Imagine trying to maneuver on crutches or especially in a wheel chair up a rather steep incline, and in

inclement weather. Regardless of whether such an individual with such a situation was inconvenienced or not, the principle remains the same: some people simply feel they are above the rules and deserve special treatment. The interesting thing is that, as in the case of the offender described above, more often than not this infraction is committed by persons who would be aghast if they thought anyone considered them anything but good, decent, red-blooded American citizens, always ready to contribute to the betterment of the community.

(Does one often see the commonly described rattle-trap occupying a reserved spot? Indeed, the vehicle usually is a rather new, rather expensive model.) To me if the usurpation of a specially designated parking spot were placed in a category, it would be that of family values. After all, isn't honor, trust, obedience of laws, thoughtfulness of others, kindness, consideration of those less fortunate, helping one's neighbor and all like attributes grouped under this aphorism?

If the woman had kicked a crutch from under a cripple, she would be roundly and soundly condemned. Likewise, if she blocked the path of a wheelchair being propelled by its struggling occupant up the hill, all would be mortified. Indeed, she would never do either of these two things. But she felt comfortable taking one's parking place. She even bragged of it.

But she is a very good, solid citizen. Like them all. ■



In France, internet still is in outer space

By Amy Harmon
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

PARIS—If the gathering had been in San Francisco or London or even Moscow, the e-mailing, Web-surfing party-goers would have been reveling in their role as bearers of their nation's digital future.

But the recent fete at the offices of AOL France was marked by a conspicuous absence of swagger.

"In France, when you speak about e-mail, they think you are a fashion victim," said Jean-Francois Marti, head of business development for America Online's French arm. "My parents don't have the slightest idea of what I'm doing. My friends, I try to convince them it's very cool and useful. They say it's useless and expensive."

In most of the industrialized world, the spread of the Internet is taken as destiny, its early disciples mostly revered as keepers of the keys to national competitiveness.

But here, high-tech hipsters are regarded as well, gauche. Intellectuals write diatribes against the global network. Web cafes go out of business.

On-line providers can't find subscribers.

The French response to the Internet has been a lot like that of Madeline, the French schoolgirl in Ludwig Bemelmans' classic children's books, to the tiger at the zoo. She said simply: "Pooh-pooh."

This attitude stems in part from a cultural heritage that has long made resistance to the dilution of things French a point of pride. More so even than movies or fast food, the Internet whisks cultures and blurs national boundaries—and perhaps most alarmingly, it does so almost exclusively in English.

Some of the Internet's harshest critics have been those who fear it will destroy the French language, and thus the identity of the nation. Its chaotic structure cuts against the French tradition of strong centralization in government, education and life. A certain studied existential angst may be at work too, the embrace of technology as a force of progress seen in itself as a surrender to cross-American optimism.

"It is not apparent in the minds of the French that the more technology you have, the happier you live," said French sociologist Gerald Mermel. "They would like to be in a society where life would be more harmonious, where work would

not be as big a part of life."

Ironically, another big reason for the French resistance to the Internet's incursions is the nation's embrace of an earlier online technology known as the Minitel. Electronic commerce took root in France more than a decade ago in the form of squat terminals given away for free by the state telephone company, France Telecom.

The devices now reside in about 7 million French homes and can be found in nearly every public building. Limited to communication within French borders, the Minitel is used mostly for practical purposes such as ordering plane tickets and looking up phone numbers—services the Internet does not yet readily provide.

There are a few signs that the Internet is beginning to take root in France. A recent blizzard of media attention has raised public awareness, and the gradual deregulation of the communications industry is expected to lower the high phone rates that have provided a more material reason for the French to stay off the Net.

But France still has fewer than four Internet-connected computers per 1,000 residents, half the rate of Germany and one-third that of the United Kingdom. And even countries with fewer connec-

tions such as Mexico and Poland are adding them at a far higher rate than France, according to Maxis Information and Directory Services, a research firm based in Austin, Texas.

France, in fact, is one of the few holdouts refusing to join the worldwide information technology love-in, and its stubborn resistance calls into question what is often seen as the Internet's inevitable and immutable ascendancy.

"There's no need for it," said Jacques Hilbey, 27, a philosophy student at the Sorbonne. "For most American people it's a game more than a tool."

Cecile Feront, 22, who attended school in the United States before graduating from France's prestigious Institute for Political Science (President Jacques Chirac is among its alumni), said she lobbied for Internet access at the school and blamed the centralized structure of the French education system for her defeat.

"In France, we have an elite culture, and because the Internet is not under the control of the authorities, they don't know how to manage it and they are afraid of it," Feront said. But she acknowledged that most of her colleagues "didn't see the point." ■

4 TH
LURIEAROUND
TOWNPrince meets with
Jordan's athletes

His Royal Highness Prince Hassan announced during an Ifar feast held last week in honor of sport unions and athletes that JD 25 million will be allocated to Jordanian sport. The ceremony, which took place at Jabri restaurant, was attended by HRH Raed Bin Zeid, chief chamberlain, HRH Rania Al Abdallah, Minister of Tourism Saleh Irsheidat and Minister of Youth Muhammad Daoudieh.

The prince posed with the oldest sportsman in Jordan, Hussein Sirage and two of Jordan's youngest athletes.



Abd Al Rahman Munif

Emphasizing cultural
diversity of AmmanBy Munther Hamdan
Star Staff Writer

In an evening of genuine culture mixed with politics, Abd Al Rahman Munif, the great Arab novelist, talked about his book *A City's Biography: Amman in the Forties* in the newly built city hall at Ras El Ein last Sunday. Munif, who

was preceded by Dr Ibrahim Khalil of the University of Jordan, dazzled the audience with the exactness and authenticity of his description of Amman in these days.

The event, which was organized by the Amman Municipality, was attended by a large number of intellectuals, politicians and the Jordanian public. Among those were HRH Prince Zeid Bin Shaker, deputy Abd Al Raouf Al Rawabdeh, President of the Jordan Engineers Association, Leith Shbeilat, Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Shneikat, and others.

Spending his childhood in Amman and studying in its schools, Munif considers this stage of life as influential and fertile.

Amman was the city in which he "saw the first light and learned his first letters." Deep into his subconscious lies the city with its springs, streets, market, and its people. "Wherever I travelled, I kept recollecting about Amman," Munif

the author's description of Amman in the forties was an immense one, recollecting every nook and cranny of the area. His

description of the human dimension was thought provoking. He explained the strong and indivisible relation between man and geography. A major element that gave Amman a distinction over other cities, is the abundance of water that then existed. "I can say that Amman was the city of springs."

Munif said Ras El Ein used to be abundant with water, describing the many springs and greenery that made Amman an attractive place to live in. In fact, its residents were from different origins. Such diversity was significant and positive "as different cultures interacted and co-existed."

Munif went on to say that

various political factors have a negative effect on the real interaction between the different cultures. He believes that housing units only do not create a city. "It is rather created by a set of social and cultural relationships."

An example of this real interaction happened in the main market of Amman (Souk). Munif said that people from different origins could be seen each wearing their traditional clothes and speaking different dialects. There were Syrians, Circassians, Palestinians, Chechens, etc. He mentioned the cattle market that was visited by people from Najd in Saudi Arabia. Those came to Amman to sell their sheep and buy commodities.

Pointing to the change that took place in Amman in terms of the increase in population and the expansion of the city limits, Munif said that this is part of the dynamic process that any city must undergo.

On another level, Munif referred to his experience in politics saying that had he not failed as a politician he would not have been a creative author.

To what extent Amman succeeded in becoming a city? This was an important question posed by the author. He said that the lack of architectural planning and the random expansion of the residential areas led to a complicated and random structure. Munif attributed this to the lack of financial resources at that time and in not having a clear vision of how compatible the structure of the city can be.

A City's Biography is an attempt to chronicle an important era in the history of Amman. It should be followed by other efforts especially from the new generation, Munif said.

Munif established himself as a creative writer of a distinctive style. His novel *The Cities of Salt*, is considered among the Arab greats. He also published other novels like *Al Ashjar Wa Ighitail Marzouk*, *Shark Al Mutawassit*, etc. ■

Abu Shakra launches Chole Innocence
for the sensuous

AMMAN (Star)—Mr Rami Abu Shakra, the general manager of Abu Shakra Trading Agency launched the new perfume "Chole Innocence." Innocence is the purity of originality. It is not naive.

Innocence is for the ideal woman who dreams of being beautiful, loved, and having her dreams fulfilled. She goes where her heart takes her, and her heart never leads her astray. She knows nothing of anxiety, her bursts of joy only enlighten existence.

Innocence is a being which will deeply affect you, a soul that is still vulnerable. ■

stranger to cynicism and hypocrisy.

It is a perfume that is a fragrant expression of innocence. A perfume that evokes frivolity and dancing, it reveals the secrets of flowers.

A perfume blending sensuality and eternity in a simple bouquet, a flash of merry sparkling light.

It is a perfume that adores the innocence of women. The best name for this fragrance is "Chole Innocence." It is available in all of Abu Shakra's showrooms and some perfumeries. ■

Rafaiah wins
Suad Sabah prize

AMMAN (Star)—The Jordanian author Jawaher Al Rafaiah has won the 1996 Suad Sabah literary prize for short story writing. She joined the competition with 650 writers from all over the Arab world and was granted the first position on her collection *Al Ghajar Wal Sabieh* (The Gypsies and the Young Girl). This short-story collection was published by the Azminah Publishing House in 1994.

Al Rafaiah considered her achievement as a boost to modern styles of writing in Jordan which have drawn the attention of Arab critics and intellectuals in the nineties.

The second collection of Rafaiah's works, titled *Akhar Mima Ahtamil* (More than I bear) has been published last year by the Arab foundation for Studies and Publishing in Beirut. ■

Michael Schumacher running
on speedmaster racing time

FROM OUTER space to the world's Formula 1 race tracks, the successor to the legendary Moon watch, the new Speedmaster Racing watch symbolizes the dynamism of the OMEGA brand—as expressed by its ambassador Michael Schumacher.

Schumacher himself best sums up the qualities of his new OMEGA Speedmaster Racing watch: "On every Formula 1 race track in the world I feel the thrill of sheer precision and speed—at 300 km/h. My love of sports has been the greatest life experience I could have. My love of fine mechanical pieces makes it a real pleasure for me to wear this highly reliable smart-looking watch."

Its contemporary sporty design and easily legible high-performance dial in bright yellow or red with matching leather straps make the new Speedmaster Racing collection appeal to a new generation of entrepreneurs and avid sportsmen. The new Speedmaster Racing watch, equipped

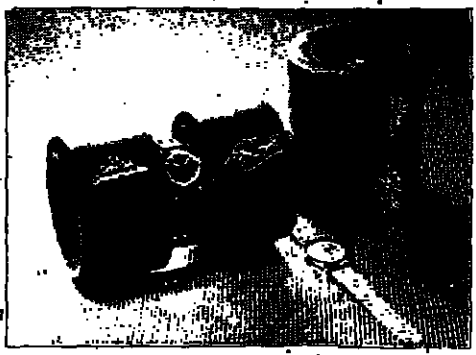
with the exclusive Omega self-winding mechanical movement 1141, comes in two versions of dials and straps:

■ Red dial. Large central chronograph hand, 30-minute and 12-hour totalizer hands all in yellow. Red boxcalf leather strap.

■ Yellow dial. Large central chronograph hand, 30-minute and 12-hour totalizer hands all in red. Yellow boxcalf leather strap.

And to enhance each OMEGA Speedmaster Racing watch, a truly original idea in watch packaging has been designed: a scale model of two Formula 1 racing tires, made of the genuine material, can double as a show window watch display as well as a gift box.

The Speedmaster Racing watch was recently presented to the public in Kerpen, Germany, birthplace of Schumacher, on the karting track where the F1 world champion first got his start.

British Midland opens
new lounge facilities at
Heathrow Airport

BRITISH MIDLAND, the airline for Europe, opens a new international Diamond Club Lounge at Heathrow Airport, designed to complement the existing domestic Diamond Club lounge. They are both dedicated to the airline's most loyal customers.

British Midland, recently voted the Best Domestic and Best Short-haul Carrier, by *Executive Travel* magazine, has spent over half a million pounds on its new lounge facilities at Heathrow Airport, and members of the airline's frequent flyer programme, can now relax in the comfort of their own dedicated lounges. This international Diamond Club lounge provides seating for over 100 people, with a wide choice of complimentary drinks and snacks, plus a separate bar area and extensive business facilities including facsimiles, a photocopier and touch-dial telephones. In addition, Diamond Club members will soon be able to take advantage of a live Internet link and satellite television.

This new lounge, situated at Gate 15, terminal 1, is just part of a package of service improvements, recently introduced by British Midland for all its business class passengers. The airline has spent over £15 million upgrading its Diamond EuroClass product and customers can now take advantage of an improved inflight meal service, new wider seats (from April 1997) and a new corporate look.

The new lounge facilities throughout British Midland's network have been designed by Czarska, one of the leading design consultancies in the civil aviation market.

Alex Grant, sales and marketing director, British Midland said: "We are continually striving to provide better facilities for our business customers and we believe that the upgraded Diamond Club lounges, now provide the highest levels of care and comfort that our most loyal passengers deserve." ■

Mr Awni Mudager, the regional manager of Cyprus Airways in Amman has been given a new post in addition to his current one. He now becomes the Regional Manager of Cyprus Airways in Palestine.



SCRAPBOOK

By Bilal Hijawi

The allies vs. Mr X

IT SEEMED no one could touch his dream. Mr X walked on a high cloud in the world of international business, a territory rarely claimed by Arab businessmen. He has amassed a wealth which is beyond the dreams of most of his peers, and the future looked like more was coming his way.

His ambition and intelligence had taken him from a mediocre engineering government post with a telecom corporation in one of the Gulf states and delivered him on the doorstep of an executive jet sales office. His ascent took less than 20 years, during which he'd built his company and amassed the kind of wealth that justified his need for such privileged methods of travel. His route to a place in the sun demanded agility and his time was an asset he could not compromise.

At that time, his company had an aspiring agenda befitting that of a small Arab country. Amidst the heights of his success, our world was only a few months shy of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and its ensuing drama. Of course, Mr X like most of us, could not predict the dangers looming on the northern horizon of Kuwait, nor was he to suspect that a fatal turn in the political agenda was brewing under his Government's Oval dome.

Mr X is a naturalized American citizen with two foot-holds that circled the world: one in the US where his company thrived on technological enterprising and the other in Kuwait where he ran his lucrative Middle East market operations.

Today, in confidence he admits his Americanism had immensely helped him realize much of his dreams. His American identity allowed him to open up doors that would have remained locked had he been identified as a techno-businessman of Arabic background. Earlier on, his experience taught him that his ethnic brethren awarded technological enterprising to the area was reserved to non-Arabs.

Through America's enterprising and resourceful system, Mr X successfully built his jewel company, staked claims to over 20 international recognized leading patents, employed a team of scientists and boasted of a backlog of sophisticated projects that spanned the globe.

During the boom of the 1970s in the Gulf, smart Jordanians were generally using their incomes to build secured real estate empires and sprawling Taj Mahals to fulfill their insatiable vanities. As dedicated, Mr X collected patents and acquired high-tech companies and the intangible knowledge of international markets.

His crowning achievement, he now tells me, would have been to create and manage an Arab telecom monopoly that would compete with Western conglomerates. The culmination of his dreams was to build telecommunications infrastructures that rival those built exclusively to service Western markets. With the eyes of an insider he saw today's telecommunications revolution when it was in the crib. In fact, his company invented today's world standard software-driven radios.

But times and fortunes change and dreams are lost. Before the subtle taste of success and glory was to be savored, Mr X's bazing into his own dream ended with a bang louder than the petrol bombs that were detonating over the southern deserts of Kuwait. Likewise the speedometer of his dream dropped while the Middle East groveled in its political chaos.

Ironically too, the America that had been a convenient ally to his dream reneged and deflated him this time around. He now had to worry about the very means of his family's survival, while the larger dreams are to wait indefinitely.

The case of Mr X is hardly an isolated example of collapsing fortunes in the wake of the Gulf War. Kingspins and middle class alike toppled down and were brought back to their normal ex-tents.

However, Mr X belongs to a different breed of kingspins. He is unique in his unchanged tenacity at creation and his undying enterprising faith. Following the war, he bailed himself and his company out with the few remaining dollars invested in his deposit accounts. Reclaiming his company and his only hope is the type of risk only fools would take.

The normal and usual course of reaction would have been to declare bankruptcy and sell off the company, while keeping those precious hidden remaining dollar accounts. But a fool with a dream, Mr X's attitude is our missing oracle: It tells us, his kind of wealth, though unseen, unfelt and untouched, is eternal and belongs to all of us.

Indeed, if you come to see it with his eyes, knowledge as wealth is an indestructible asset and an inheritance of value unbound by time. Mr X may die an unrealized dreamer. But such attitudes of emancipation from material glory is what we shall need. Only a tiny bucket of Arabs make today's enterprising free, the majority are using mortar and stone to build their dreams.

Is our collection of fancy Taj Mahals and the sprawling dummies, retained for their higher future redemption value, a true wealth. One day an earthquake will flatten these masonry dreams and leave us all without inheritance.

In the aftermath of Mr X's personal earthquake, his disposition on life has not changed. He's intact and now you can still find him searching for partners to rebuild that same dream. But with his newly reset material status no one is listening. He jokingly says that a big mansion in Abdou is what he really needs to prick up the ears of Jordanian investors. He accuses that our investors see no value in his patented technologies and the proven success record of his company. Instead, our financiers want to see, touch and smell material insurance against their money.

Tenaciously, Mr X had been busy stitching the rags of his lost dream. Though the engine of his enterprise runs slower today, the spark hasn't died. In light of his new solid commitment, I've seen a lot of reason to dedicate this article to him and to admonish those who have remained in their miserable ivory towers. What surely was an irreversible end to those in his shoes, was the signaling of a new harvest season to Mr X. ■

AGENDA

Exhibitions

■ Contemporary Arab Artists Exhibition. The New Collection at the Darat Al Funun, continues till 27 February.

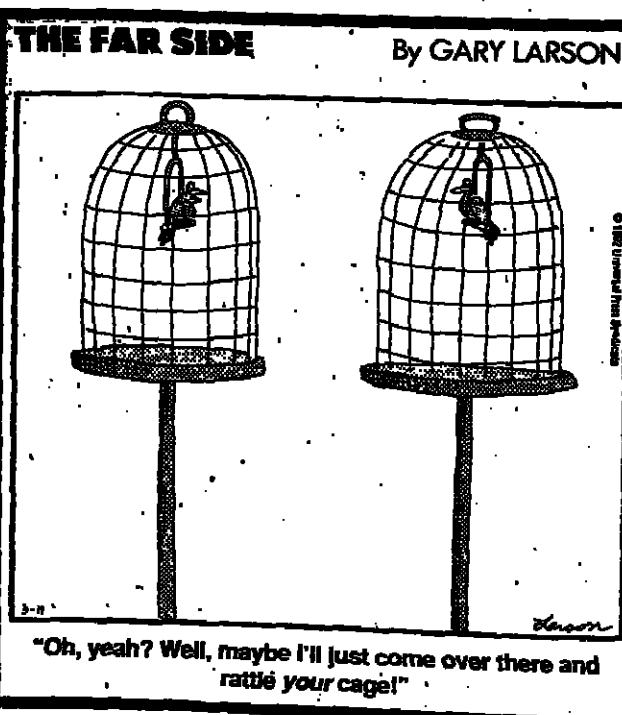
■ Plastic art by Egyptian artist Muhammad Abd Al Rahim at the Royal Cultural Center, ends today.

■ L'Institut du Monde Arabe at The French Cultural Center, ends today.

■ Mini Bazaar and open house at Um El Kundum. Lithographs, old postcards and photographs on Jerusalem, Chinese paintings, arts, and crafts, fresh farm produce, off the Airport highway on the way to the Arabian Horse Club, first left at the top of the hill. Friday 7 February from 11:00 am till 5:00 pm. Tel: 664805.

Films

■ *Mauvais Sang* at the French Cultural Center, 10 February, at 8:30 pm.



FEBRUARY 1997

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Flyswatters better than magic bullets

Public health is often best served by taking the low road

The AIDS 'drug cocktail.' The dramatic fight against the Ebola virus in Zaire. These and other well-documented triumphs have given the public health establishment a high-tech image. But the image belies the facts. Common sense, simplicity and ease of use are still the keys to real advances—medically speaking—in the common good

By Molly Colin

AMONG HER global sojourns as a public health worker, Susan Holcombe spent some time on the tiny Pacific island of Vanuatu where malaria was rampant.

Holcombe and others assessing the problem finally linked the high rate of malarial infection to the country's copious production of coconut oil. As a result of this industry, little brown shells littered the humid terrain. Rain water collected in the shells, turning them into perfect breeding pools for mosquitoes. A solution to lowering the rate of malarial infection was simple, recalls Holcombe, now director of Global Programs for Oxfam America: villagers were encouraged to clean up the shells, which reduced the number of mosquitoes, in turn cutting the risk of malaria.

Such simple solutions are not uncommon. Unlike the highly sophisticated and expensive procedures used to fight the deadly Ebola virus in the book and film, *The Hot Zone*, many public health measures can cost less than a daily newspaper.

"Low-tech, non-sexy methods of preventing disease play a significant role in the health of populations of the world," says Dr. Miriam Alexander, director of the Preventive Medicine Program at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

Some simple measures grow out of what may be perceived as common sense—washing hands to prevent the spread of the common cold, for instance. Other simple techniques are arrived at through costly scientific development.

An effective treatment for diarrhea can be had for less than pennies a day

and saves millions of lives. Diarrhea is the second leading cause of death among the world's children, according to the World Health Organization. Diarrhea itself is not a disease but it is a symptom of an underlying problem, usually the result of ingesting food or water contaminated by human waste. Diarrhea can cause severe, and in children potentially fatal, dehydration.

Oral rehydration salts, which cost about five cents to buy, are easy to use and in all but the severest cases of dehydration can replace an intravenous

REPORTING FROM BOSTON

Unlike the highly expensive procedures used to fight the deadly Ebola virus in the film, *The Hot Zone*, many public health measures can cost less than a daily newspaper

needle, sterile solution and a technician to insert the needle. The salts don't stop diarrhea, cautions Dr. Richard Cash, a Fellow at the Harvard Institute for International Development. Rather, they allow recovery from the dehydration and then the body heals itself in the best of cases. "Oral rehydration therapy represents highly appropriate technology," he says.

One of the best preventions against diarrhea is washing hands with soap and clean water—or even clean mud—after defecation and before cooking or eating. Other simple measures to provide uncontaminated water for drinking or personal hygiene include digging deep, covered wells; using clean, covered containers to carry or store water in; disinfecting water either by chemical means or boiling it; or delivering potable water to villages.

But in the developing world even

clean water and adequate sanitation can be difficult or impossible to possess for reasons of cost or accessibility. Those who know to boil water often can't afford fuel or firewood.

Another simple measure to fight diarrhea, typhoid and parasitical infections is to set up safe latrines so that waste water doesn't seep into the ground water. One type of effective latrine that costs around US\$5 to buy is designed to contain flies. In tropical areas, rain attracts many flies. The insects are a major transmitter of diarrhea after they have had contact with human feces and carry the infection elsewhere. The so-called "V.I.P." latrine has a ventilation pipe covered by a screen. The interior of the toilet is kept dark. Because flies are attracted to light, the flies fly to the end of the pipe

and can't get out. But while the design and price may seem right, "It's hard to get folks to shell out \$5 to buy a latrine," says Holcombe.

High on the list of public health solutions for most intestinal infections and diarrhea are simple pit latrines, according to Marion Jenkins, a former UNICEF water and sanitation expert in Benin. "They have been shown in epidemiological studies to be more effective than improved water supplies," she says. Now a doctoral student at the University of California, Davis, Jenkins is working with UNICEF on eliminating guinea worm disease. Guinea worm is a disease ac-

► LOW ROAD PAGE 2



Keep it simple: a potentially rabid dog tries to avoid capture. In Europe, scattering vaccinated baits out of aircraft has checked the spread of rabies, greatly reducing the number of scenes like this

Disease-carrying foxes elude hunters

Cure for rabies gets thrown out of plane

By Jacqueline Wisselins

RABIES IS ENDEMIC in large parts of the world. Worldwide, more than 33,000 people die of rabies each year, mostly from the bites or scratches of rabid dogs.

In Europe, however, rabies is mainly carried by foxes or bats. Due to a oral vaccination the rabies has situation improved dramatically over the past decade. In 1983, the total of reported rabies cases in Europe amounted to 23,002. In 1995, when oral vaccination was carried out in most European countries, 8,134 cases were reported. In some countries, fox-transmitted rabies has already totally disappeared.

Fox-mediated rabies did not appear in Western Europe before the 1960s. At first, the disease was fought by killing rabies-carrying animals. This proved unsuccessful, since it was often impossible to get hold of the infected animals. So Europe turned to an approach first tested in the United States in the 1960s after two severe outbreaks of the disease, one in Arctic foxes in Canada and one in foxes in central New York State. This was the dropping of vaccinated baits in areas where the potential carriers could find and eat them.

Since the first field trial in Switzerland in 1978—with vaccine contained in chicken heads—more than 59 million vaccine baits have been scattered throughout 15 countries in Europe and North America. In Europe alone, 14 million baits are placed by hand or helicopter each year.

Many improvements have been made. The chicken head was replaced by machine-made baits that are easy to mass produce. And, more importantly, the vaccine initially used, which made rodents and some other animal species ill when they ingested it, was—at least in some countries—replaced by a more innocuous one.

In the second half of the 1980s, most West-European countries took part in the vaccination campaigns. But,

as these were not perfectly synchronized and (partly for economical reasons) not always done on an ideally large scale, this did not prevent a major outbreak of rabies in 1989. From then on, however, its occurrence regressed in most countries as the vaccination campaigns were intensified.

A great spring offensive took place in 1994: 10 European countries took part in it, with an area of about 300,000 square kilometers being covered. The campaign was coordinated with the support of the World Health Organization's Veterinary Public Health Unit and partly financed by the European Union. The statistics on rabies are updated every week by the WHO Collaboration Centre for Rabies Surveillance and Research in the German town of Tübingen, and published in the weekly Rabies Bulletin. All these measures resulted in a substantial drop

in the number of rabies cases in animals. Nowadays, the rare cases of human (and even canine) rabies are mostly imported from outside Europe.

In Germany, for instance, the number of rabies cases fell from 5,572 in 1990, to 853 in 1993. In France, one of the last countries to join the vaccination campaigns, the drop was even more spectacular: from 4,213 in 1989 to 17 in 1996: a decrease of 99.6 percent. "We have often been criticized for waiting so long," says Dr. Michel Aubert, who heads the French vaccination campaign. "But we didn't want to take the risk of infecting rodents and pre-

ferred to try and develop a safer vaccine. Eventually, we were proved right: now we are the only country showing a permanent decrease in animal rabies."

The further one goes to the West, the less rabies one finds. In The Netherlands, bordering Germany and Belgium, not a single case of rabies in foxes has been reported for several years. As a result, the placement of vaccine baits has stopped.

Unfortunately, there still remain a few areas where the disease keeps coming back. The situation is not as bad as in the US, where the disease has exploded, not only among foxes but among raccoons as well. One reason for this is that the larger the distances the animals can freely roam, the greater the difficulty in halting the disease. In Switzerland, for example, oral vaccination of foxes stopped the spread of the disease, but only after 60 percent of foxes had been vaccinated. A similar program in New York state to deal with raccoons could take 20 years to complete, according to a CDC (Center for Disease Control) report.

To deal with the problem, vaccine baits must be increased and the vaccination programs need to be synchronized. Aubert cites the example of the former East Germany, which was vaccinated as a whole when it was reunited with West Germany and has been rabies-free ever since. Previously, rabies was successfully eradicated in some areas but reappeared in others.

In bats, rabies seems impossible to eradicate for the time being. "Only by informing the public can one prevent it from spreading," says Aubert. Bats are infected in most countries, even in fox rabies-free Holland. "Bats are a protected species, and one is neither allowed to kill nor to remove them," according to one official from the Dutch Ministry of Health. "Moreover, bats are insect eaters, and we are as unable to introduce vaccine into insects as to use these as baits."

There lie the limits to the use of this otherwise successful method of oral vaccination, which has been used also to combat echinococcosis (tape worm) in foxes. Despite this drawback, most scientists are convinced that rabies in Europe will be eradicated in the near future. ☐

JACQUELINE WESSELIUS IS AN AMSTERDAM-BASED FREELANCE WRITER SPECIALIZING IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

It's not the insecticide, it's how you use it

Malaria hobbled by mosquito nets

By Mostafa Kamal Majumder

PEOPLE IN BANGLADESH's south-eastern and north-eastern districts bordering India who suffer from high fever and behave abnormally, are unable to stand and walk on their own, or have convulsions are suspected by health workers to be suffering from cerebral malaria. If left untreated, the risk of death for the patient—whose brain is attacked by the malarial parasite—is very high. Patients are not so much at risk if they are attacked by less complicated varieties of malaria, which are cured with a three-day course of chloroquine tablets, but regardless of the variety malaria has emerged as a major public health threat in 90 of the 490 border thanas (sub-districts). Since 1993, malaria has been widespread and has caused at least 4,000 deaths.

Over the last few years health workers of the Directorate of Health Services stationed in the affected districts have been trained in "early diagnosis and prompt treatment techniques" to prevent deaths caused by malaria. But they are ill-equipped to deal with the female anopheles mosquito, which come down the hilly slopes and spread the deadly disease. Spraying dwellings with DDT has been banned since

1991, and in the most affected hill districts—Bandarban, Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Cox's Bazar—even very localized spraying of insecticides has proved useless because, after biting humans, mosquitoes flee to forests instead of resting on walls or fences of houses.

Against this backdrop, health officials started in 1995 encouraging people to use mosquito nets treated with the insecticide Delta-methrine. In the beginning they distributed 400 treated mosquito nets free of costs to 200 families living in Barachhara, a village four

kilometers from the town of Cox's Bazaar. According to Dr. Quazi Enamul Kabir, who was associated with that operation, one month after the nets were distributed malaria deaths in the village—which was experiencing an epidemic—had stopped.

Since then, officials are urging all people to use treated mosquito nets after sunset. Thana health complexes make insecticide solutions available for villagers to retreat their nets. Health workers also use village

► MALARIA HOBBOLED PAGE 2



Maybe there was a hole: when used, pesticide-treated mosquito nets have dramatically reduced the spread of malaria, a globally resurgent disease

THE COMMON GOOD

MALARIA HOBBOLED

Continued from page 1

schools as centers where villagers can get their mosquito nets dipped and dried in their presence. The insecticide solution is given free. School teachers, clerics, rural leaders and tribal headmen are all utilized to get people to use treated nets.

Says Dr. A.M. Zakir Hussain, Director of Primary Health Care and Disease Control of the government, the use of mosquito nets has proved "efficient and effective." So far about 100,000 nets have been treated in the most heavily afflicted districts. Hussain, who himself uses treated mosquito nets, notes that bed-bugs and head lice also die after coming into contact with them.

According to Hussain, authorities have faced no problems so far. Only one letter, complaining the increase of acute respiratory infections (ARI) among children, was received at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council in Dhaka last year. But the writer of the letter, from Sylhet district, could not be traced. Health officials say Delta-methrine which has recently been banned for agricultural uses in Bangladesh for its harmful effects on aquatic life, has nothing to do with ARI.

A treated net remains effective for about nine months. Health workers advise people of the affected "thanas" to get their mosquito nets treated at least once every year. The method is also cheap. One liter of Delta-methrine

which costs about US\$25 is sufficient to treat at least 70 mosquito nets for nine months. Preparation of solutions, dipping, dripping and drying of nets, however, should be efficient to get optimum results. The program is being supported by WHO under a program of Integrated Control of Vector Borne Diseases.

The practice of using mosquito nets is common among high, middle



and lower middle class families in Bangladesh. A poor family, however, is usually deterred by the investment of about \$6-15 needed for a mosquito net. Says Mohammed Abul Kamal, Head of Medical Sociology of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) of the government, most people accept the nets, though a few complain that it

adds to their discomfort during the hot summer months.

Abul Kamal is studying the experimental application of treated mosquito nets to curb Kala Azar, a disease spread by sand flies. To make treated mosquito nets deadly to the sand flies, the same Delta-methrine is used about the dose is doubled, he says.

By 1970 about 80 percent of Bangladesh had become malaria-free after the implementation of a 14-year malaria eradication program with support from WHO and USAID. All households in Bangladesh were sprayed with DDT under that program, which had given an added benefit of checking the outbreak of Kala Azar. The hilly areas, however, were left uncovered when the 1971 war of liberation broke out. The malaria eradication program was later scaled down to a malaria control program.

Since the late 1970s malaria started showing signs of its coming back. During the last four years the attack of cerebral malaria has been widespread. During 1994 and 1995 the disease had taken epidemic proportions in some areas. During the two years 1,278 and 1,589 people respectively died of the disease, official statistics show. In 1996, however, there was no epidemic—something that may be attributable to the treated netting. ☐

MOSTAFA MAJUMDER IS A BANGLADESHI JOURNALIST WHO WRITES FOR THE LONDON-BASED PANOS INSTITUTE.

A cure for 'needlephobia'

Vaccines on the lunch menu

By Sally Weeks

NEW VACCINES grown in food could have a dramatic health effect in developing countries where many of the current immunizations are too expensive for widespread use, according to plant scientist Dr. Charles J. Arntzen.

This is not just futuristic musing. Human testing is imminent on an anti-diarrheal vaccine grown in potatoes, and work is well under way on a hepatitis B immunization that will come in bananas.

Our focus now is on the developing world," says Arntzen, whose research team in Ithaca, New York, is committed to making inexpensive vaccines that can be efficiently administered in the Third World, including transport and storage without refrigeration.

Ease of use is the key. "The eradication of polio in North and South America is due to the efficient system of delivering the vaccine," noted Arntzen.

His group has had exceptionally encouraging results in its work to fight diarrheal diseases, which kill an estimated 5 million children a year in developing countries. In the US and other industrialized areas, diarrhea generally can be treated effectively with hydration therapy.

"But if you're in the Third World and you're an infant—and the water is contaminated—it becomes life-threatening," he observes.

Using genetic manipulation, Arntzen's team introduced into potatoes a protein from an infectious variety of E. coli that causes diarrhea. When potatoes grown from the special strain are fed to mice, the animals produce appropriate antibodies. The results are especially promising because they showed that oral ingestion of the potatoes—without any injection—appeared sufficient to create immunity.

Human tests are needed to prove

this, however, because mice don't contract the human form of diarrheal diseases. An application for the first phase of human testing is pending before the US Food and Drug Administration and approval is expected, perhaps within a few months. If granted, adult volunteers will participate.

One problem with using potatoes for the vaccine is that they will have to be eaten raw (cooking appears to destroy the special protein). A single small potato would be enough for a dose, however, so Arntzen says eating it raw is not out of the question. But it is not ideal, and presumably would not be suitable for infants.

Thus the researchers have already

This is not just futuristic musing. Human testing is imminent on an anti-diarrheal vaccine grown in potatoes, and work is well under way on a hepatitis B immunization that will come in bananas

shown that they can introduce a foreign protein into the fruit—this time a gene associated with hepatitis B.

"We have our first bananas in seedling form," says Arntzen. "These will take about two years to grow to maturity so we can test the vaccine content of the fruit."

Hepatitis B vaccination "would be recommended around the world if there were a cost-effective vaccine," says Arntzen. Currently the synthetically produced version costs about US\$150 per immunization. He's hoping the genetically altered bananas will provide an affordable alternative.

For the banana research, the Ithaca group has teamed up with scientists in Irapuato, Mexico. This was partly be-

cause the US scientists needed a country where bananas can be grown, but also because they felt it important to begin collaborative research with a developing country fairly early in the process of making a new vaccine.

Doing all the work in the United States, "then sending a package all dressed up with a bow and putting it on their doorstep" is not a good way to get results, observes Arntzen.

"The Rockefeller Foundation is providing funding in Mexico, and they are interested in engaging the Ministry of Health there and in other countries," he says. "If the other countries are involved, the whole project and resulting drugs will be more effective."

He emphasized that vaccine-carrying food will not be sitting unmarked on grocery-store shelves. The fruits or vegetables will be produced and distributed in a controlled fashion, in some ways like the pharmaceuticals of today.

Arntzen admits the whole idea may take some getting used to, but says it may sound stranger in the US than in other countries.

"In the developing world, most countries use herbal medicines," he explains. "Plants are an accepted part of the delivery system for pharmaceuticals." In the US, the general pattern—even for proven herbal remedies—is to isolate the effective element, reproduce it synthetically in the lab and make a pill out of it.

"It's not unreasonable to ask why we go through all that. Why not just drink the tea?" ☐

SALLY WEEKS IS *The WorldPaper's* CONTRIBUTING EDITOR.

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LOW ROAD

Continued from page 1

quired by drinking water containing worm larvae. There is no cure for the generally non-fatal but debilitating disease.

Eradicating guinea worm disease is "horribly simple and low tech," Jenkins said. It consists of filtering drinking water through a piece of cotton cloth that most people already have. What's more, new research on cholera suggests that filtering water as for guinea worm disease might vastly reduce cholera cases. This is because cholera appears to live permanently in plankton and copepods, a kind of tiny crab-like water creature, especially in coastal waters.

In many cases, vaccines offer even less

expensive and easily administered protection against disease: polio requires only a few drops of liquid to swallow. There is a vaccine for cholera but its effects are not long-lasting. And experts ask whether it is appropriate to give it there is good water and sanitation available.

While many of these simple public health measures are available around the globe, education, information and marketing the latest tactic are fundamental to their adoption.

To the casual observer, public health is simply a matter of common sense. Common sense, however, does not cross cultural and national boundaries in one form like a bottle of Coca-Cola.

"We have made the error in promoting the use of latrines in developing

countries based on the germ theory of diseases to convince people of their advantages," says Jenkins. "In fact, a more effective message in the cultural context of Benin, is promoting latrines for reasons of increased privacy and convenience, especially for women, or for improved safety from snakes and other culturally perceived dangers of defecating in the bush that exist as part of their collective belief system."

"If the goal of using the latrines is met," she concludes, "it doesn't matter in the end why." ☐

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ENGLISH PROGRAM

SATURDAY

1:00—Holy Quran
1:05—Cartoon
2:30—Till' Comedy
3:00—French Program
3:30—Peking Action
3:30—Love Lucy
4:00—French Program
4:30—News Headlines
5:00—Handing with M
5:30—American
6:00—America
6:30—Innocent V. M
7:00—News at Ten
7:00—Till' Comedy
7:15—Feature Film
Powers with M

SUNDAY

1:00—Holy Quran
1:05—Star Chase
2:30—Till' Comedy
3:00—French Program
3:30—Love Lucy
4:00—French Program
4:30—News Headlines
5:00—Handing with M
5:30—American
6:00—America
6:30—Innocent V. M
7:00—News at Ten
7:00—Till' Comedy
7:15—Feature Film
Powers with M

MONDAY

1:00—Holy Quran
1:05—Cartoon
2:30—Till' Comedy
3:00—French Program
3:30—Love Lucy
4:00—French Program
4:30—News Headlines
5:00—Handing with M
5:30—American
6:00—America
6:30—Innocent V. M
7:00—News at Ten
7:00—Till' Comedy
7:15—Feature Film
Powers with M

CROSS

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The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 8 - 14 February

Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): *Vampire in Brooklyn*
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): *The American President*
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): *Judge Dredd*
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): *The Fan*
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): *Custom Made Citizen Play*

Highlight of Eid Al-fitr week at the Pleasure Dome

● Turn Great Godmother Natty's nifty dude ranch into a podunk, inhorn, environment-fouling, Ya-hoo theme park?

Olsen twins Mary-Kate and Ashley lead the battle of wits and wills to save the beloved ranch in the feature-length comedy *How the West Was Fun*. Trying to sell the spread out from under them is bumbling lower-than-a-snake's belly scoundrel Bart Gifooley (Martin Mull). "This ranch ain't big enough for the three of us," he snarls. Little does he know he's challenging two of the cleverest second graders (advance reading group, too!) anywhere.

Enjoy the show. And why not share an Olsen twins double feature? Also available from Warner Home Video are the Ashley/Mary-Kate movies, *It Takes Two*, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble* and *To Grandmother's House We Go*.

Courtesy: "The Pleasure Dome" Tel: 676558 - Fax: 5538087

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Cartoon
2:30—Tilt (Comedy)
3:00—French programs
4:00—Peking Acroba
5:30—I Love Lucy
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Hanging with Mr. Cooper (Comedy)
8:00—America's Funniest Home Videos
8:30—Innocent Victims (Mini Series)
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Yanni
11:15—Feature Film: *Dances with Wolves*

SUNDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Star Chaser (Cartoon)
2:30—Tilt
4:00—French Programs
5:30—I Love Lucy
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—America's Funniest Home Videos
8:30—Innocent Victims (Mini Series)
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Boston Pops
12:00—Feature Film: *That is Entertainment*, starring: Fred Astair and Gene Kelly

MONDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Cartoon
2:30—Tilt
3:00—French Program
4:00—Feature Film
5:30—I Love Lucy



Yanni, Saturday at 10:25 pm

TUESDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Cartoon
2:30—Tilt
3:00—Feature Film: *A Tribute to the Boys—Laurel and Hardy*

WEDNESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:05—The Muppet Show
2:30—Cartoon
3:30—French Programs
4:00—Earth Revealed

THURSDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:05—Cartoon
2:30—Curiosity Show
3:00—They Came from Outer Space & NBA Basketball
5:00—News Flash
5:02—Out of This World
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Parenthood
8:00—Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Babylon 5 (Science Fiction)
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Feature Film: *Armed and Innocent*, starring: Gerald McRaney and Kate Jackson
12:00—Taratata

FRIDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:05—Cartoon
2:15—Playabout & Flintstones & See How They Grow
4:00—Crystal Maze
5:00—News Flash
5:02—Science Encyclopedia
5:30—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—America's Funniest Home Videos
8:00—You Bet Your Life
8:30—Babylon 5 (Science Fiction)

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS SAMEDI

1:30—Dessins animés
3:00—Emission Jeunesse
Fête des bébés
6:00—Série policière
Les jurés de l'ombre
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Ziva

DIMANCHE

4:00—Film
Faites sauter la banque, avec Louis de Funès
6:00—Variétés
Claude Nougaro
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Magazine sud

LUNDI

1:30—Dessins animés
2:00—Magazine
Montagne
Les arènes de lumière
6:00—Concert
Julien Clerc à l'Olympia
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Cinq sur cinq

MARDI

3:00—Dessins animés
3:30—Jeux

Programs are subject to change by JTV

Eid Al-Fitr weeks' special Video Releases

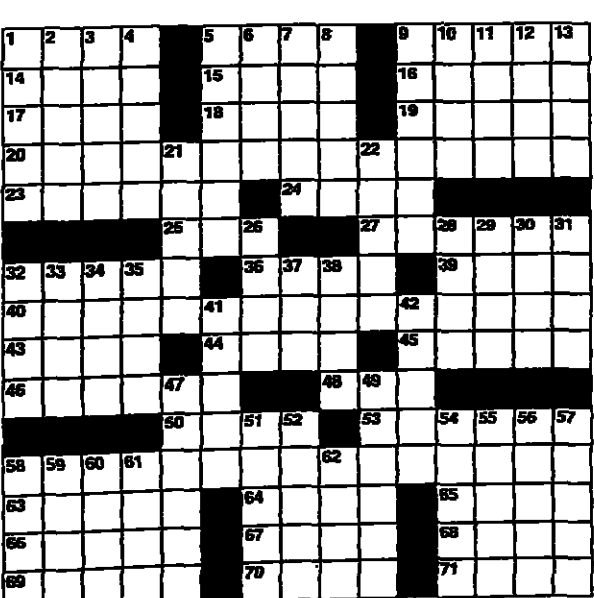
■ **Dazed And Confused:** It's the last day of high school before summer vacation 1976 (The film is shot in the 90's though). There are fixes for everything that bothers you at 17. Sex is still safe; drugs are not dangerous yet and booze is having fun. The soundtrack on this film is a real killer of a track, song after song of the greatest from the 60's and 70's.

■ **To Die For:** Nicole Kidman is even more stunning than ever in her role as a weather reporter on TV. Married with the not so ambitious Matt Dillon, she would do anything to get what she wants... absolutely anything. "What's the point of doing anything if people are not watching?"

■ **Unlawful Entry:** A policeman's concern for the safety of a couple living in the neighborhood becomes a twisted obsession. The protector becomes the predator and security develops to be the couples nightmare. An excellent thriller starring Kurt Russell, Ray Liotta, and Madeleine Stowe.

◀ **Coming on Valentine's Day (14/2/97).**
INDEPENDENCE DAY: The film that grossed more than any other in the history of box office sales.
Courtesy: "The Pleasure Dome" Tel: 676558 - Fax: 5538087

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

1 History
5 Satisfy
9 Palm fruit
14 Away from the wind
15 Grouch
16 Keep out of reach
17 Teased
18 Deal
19 Saltwater
20 Relevance
21 Testimony
23 Two-wheeled cartilage
24 Lebanese coastal city
25 Pleasant
27 Pencil and
32 Space for activity
36 Baldwin or Guinness
39 Race distance
40 Hide

DOWN

1 Make thirsty
2 Island greeting
3 Family vehicle
4 Adolescent
5 Plan
6 War god
7 Fortune-telling card
8 Dark wood
9 More compact
10 Landed
11 Ballet garb
12 Utopia
13 Withered
21 Doomed one
22 Upright
28 Fade
29 "I met... with...
29 Incite a watching
30 Actress
31 Musical pause
32 Celestial
33 Net or trap
34 Almost round
35 Cuzco's land
37 "Misérables"
38 Italian princely family
41 Overweight
42 Havers
47 Composer
48 Vehicle on runners
51 Box
52 Of sixty minutes
54 Gilt-free
56 Alabama city
58 School assignment
59 Schoolboy
60 "I smell..."
61 Bob or nap
62 Muse number

—THIS WEEK'S— HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: It's always easier to learn while the sun's in Aquarius. Everybody's in the mood, so it's almost like a party.

Aries (March 21-April 19): You're really going to feel like skipping work. If you do, get a studious friend to cover for you. Ask for help to keep up with a horrendous assignment.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): Pay debts even if you're not expecting any money in for a while. Get a foreign friend to help with your language lessons.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): Don't listen to your mate's silly scheme; it won't work. If you need money, apply for loans or a job.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): It seems like the work you're doing is getting you nowhere. Don't fret, you'll get some very significant stuff accomplished with the help of your mate.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Flirtations may not play out, so don't take them too seriously. You'd better do your work as if your life depended on it.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't worry about a mess at home. No damage will be done. Save as much time as possible for planning.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): Review old material. Take care of a domestic dispute and decide on a new course of action. A romantic commitment could last a lifetime.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): Money could slip through your fingers. Be careful. Domestic responsibilities nag at you. Give in to their demands.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You're feeling good, but you may not get much done. Review material you should know by now. Go shopping for something that will help you.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Hand in an overdue assignment. Make well reasoned decisions about your finances and then go spend the money.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A friend's scheme won't work. Advise him or her to go slowly. You may discover a requirement you forgot to meet. Don't freak out, just do it.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): If it seems like an older person isn't making sense, you're right. A project may change, so don't worry about it.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Take a journey with friends to put a nagging question to rest. The truth will set you free.

Bridge

A Cheap Way to Buy Time
By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

Both vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH
♠ A 10 3 2
♥ Q 7 3
♦ 10 4
♣ Q J 8 6

EAST
♠ Q 9 8 7 6
♥ A 8 6
♦ K 8 6
♣ A 5

WEST
♠ 4
♥ 5 4 2
♦ Q 9 7 3 2
♣ 7 4 3 2

SOUTH
♠ K J 5
♥ K J 10 9
♦ A J 5
♣ K 10 9

The bidding:
East South West North
1♣ INT Pass 3NT
Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Three of ♠
There was a small price to pay if South was going to make three no-trump. Can you spot it?

Since South's one-no-trump overall showed the equivalent of a sound no-trump opening bid, North's jump to game can be justified. Had West led a spade, declarer would have had no problem. What should the outcome be after a diamond lead?

At the table declarer captured East's king of diamonds with the ace and forced out the ace of hearts. East returned a diamond, and West allowed dummy's ten to win the trick. Declarer had only eight tricks without clubs. It was easy enough to set up tricks in the suit, but declarer never got to enjoy them. East rushed up with the ace on the first club lead and returned another diamond, and the defenders came to three diamond tricks to go with the two aces — down one.

Curiously, the winning play is to give the opponents a trick to which they are not entitled, and in the process shut out two of their tricks. Declarer must allow the king of diamonds to win the first trick, thereby surrendering a second trick in the suit. The continuation of the eight of diamonds is also ducked, declarer winning the third round of the suit. Since East is marked by the opening bid for both the ace of hearts and the ace of clubs, declarer can now go about driving both of them out and West cannot regain the lead.

What if diamonds are 4-4? That is against the odds and unlikely because of the opening lead. West would not refrain from leading partner's suit to attack with a weak four-card minor.

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TRUE! By Daryl Cagle



The average man sees his parents 47 times a year. The average woman sees her parents 62 times a year.
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Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

YOSUM
MOTCE
RITHEH
FIEBLE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here:

Answers: MOUSY COMET HITTER BELLEF

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Words of Wisdom

Never make plans based on faulty assumptions.

Opinions are the arrows that speed action — it just seems as if the bad ones move faster than others.

In any new business project, a small percentage of employees will be enthusiastic, a larger percentage will be pessimistic and the vast majority won't care.

Guilt seeks both punishment and escape from punishment.

Experience leads to judgment, willingly or not.

Living on plans of what you'd like to be doing is no kind of life at all.

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Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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NOTHING MAKES YOU MORE TOLERANT OF A NOISY PARTY THAN BEING THERE.

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

L'après-Hébron en discussion

Yasser Arafat (notre photo) et Benjamin Netanyahu doivent se rencontrer aujourd'hui à Erez, principal point de passage entre Israël et la bande de Gaza, pour discuter des dossiers en suspens après l'accord d'Hébron signé le 15 janvier dernier. Avant ce sommet, le leader palestinien a établi une liste de 34 points inclus dans les accords d'autonomie qui n'ont toujours pas été réglés. Il a affirmé qu'il demanderait un arbitrage international si Israël ne respectait pas ses engagements. Parmi les demandes de Yasser Arafat figurent la libération des prisonniers palestiniens, l'ouverture de l'aéroport et du port de Gaza, et la création de points de passage entre la Cisjordanie et la bande de Gaza. Le président palestinien dénonce également le blocage imposé par Israël sur les territoires palestiniens, blocage qui a provoqué une aggravation du chômage et une paralysie partielle de l'économie palestinienne. M. Arafat a estimé que le blocage des territoires faisait perdre 7 millions de dollars par jour aux Palestiniens. L'accord d'Hébron, outre le retrait partiel de l'armée israélienne de 80% d'Hébron, prévoit dans les deux mois le démarrage de négociations sur le statut définitif des territoires palestiniens.



Transports

Un long train de privatisations

La Jordanie cherche actuellement à améliorer ses transports publics et souhaite développer son réseau ferroviaire. Des projets coûteux qui doivent passer par la privatisation de certains services.

Pour la Jordanie.

La modernisation de ses moyens de transports est primordiale afin de préparer le pays à rentrer dans le 21ème siècle. Certains grands domaines de l'économie, tels que récemment celui des télécommunications, doivent en effet aujourd'hui être confiés à des compagnies privées pour alléger le budget de l'Etat. Une priorité fixée par le gouvernement de M. Kabarihi qui a fêté cette semaine son premier anniversaire.

Chargé de ce dossier, le ministre des Transports Naser al Lawzi compte sur la Banque mondiale et des investisseurs étrangers pour mener à bien la privatisation de la STP, la société de transports publics, et celle des chemins de fer d'Aqaba.

«La Jordanie compte aujourd'hui créer une infrastructure de voies ferrées parallèlement aux lignes d'aviation déjà en service», explique Naser al Lawzi. Le projet le plus important actuellement à l'étude est donc la cession de la ligne du Hijaz, qui, en Jordanie, relie Amman à Ma'an. Une ligne qui a été prolongée vers Aqaba pour le transport des phosphates.

«La voie allant d'Amman à Aqaba est en mauvais état et coûte cher au budget gouvernemental», explique



Naser al Lawzi, ministre des Transports

Il s'agit désormais pour ce réseau de faire appliquer les textes et de dénoncer les violations commises dans certains pays. Une telle initiative ne peut être que louée et encouragée. Il n'est plus tolérable de maintenir le silence sur la mort d'un journaliste, ou bien sur l'incarcération de personnes pendant des années ou des décennies qui n'ont commis comme seul crime que celui d'avoir exprimé leurs opinions. De nombreuses pratiques d'un autre âge doivent elles aussi aujourd'hui disparaître, telles que l'exécution forcée des femmes ou bien les crimes d'honneur. De plus, il est inimaginable que dans un monde qui s'apprête à entrer dans le 21ème siècle, on tolère encore la condamnation de certaines personnes uniquement pour des raisons raciales ou religieuses.

Ce réseau qui regroupe les élites intellectuelles de sociétés différentes doit permettre, avec tous les défenseurs des droits de l'Homme travaillant depuis déjà longtemps dans ce domaine, d'obtenir enfin l'application des droits de l'Homme dans la zone euro-méditerranéenne.

Tous les pays concernés par ce nouveau réseau doivent aujourd'hui tenir compte d'une réalité toute simple, qui est que l'être humain n'ignore plus ses droits essentiels. Et si certains pays continuent de nier le progrès et le développement de la conscience humaine, ils risquent de rater le train de la sécurité et de la stabilité qui confortera leur avenir.

Sa'eda Kilani

Le Jourdain, on y revient.
Tous les jeudis dans le Star
645 380

Economie régionale

Une nécessaire coopération

Avec la récente signature d'accords de coopération, la Syrie et le Liban œuvrent au rapprochement de leurs économies. Un exemple de coopération qui devrait être imité dans la région.

Très différents

par leur histoire et leur géographie, le Liban et la Syrie semblent aujourd'hui poussés vers une intégration économique. Voilà quelques semaines, leurs deux gouvernements signaient des accords économiques rapprochant énormément Libanais et Syriens. C'est en effet le 12 janvier que le comité officiel de suivi et de coordination syro-libanaise a adopté des mesures destinées à encourager les investissements, établir des postes frontaliers communs et éliminer la double imposition en ce qui concerne l'impôt sur le revenu. Et ce comité travaille actuellement sur de nouvelles mesures destinées à lier encore plus les deux économies.

Les racines d'un tel rapprochement existaient déjà. Grâce à la France et sa partenaire de l'époque, la Grande-Bretagne, cette région a subi une partition politique juste après la première guerre mondiale. Dans les années 20 a été créée une république libanaise séparée de la Syrie. Les deux étant alors placées sous la tutelle française.

Aujourd'hui, on est en train d'essayer de gommer les différences économiques entre Beyrouth et Damas. Bien qu'un fossé sépare l'économie socialiste syrienne des hommes d'affaires libanais qui font partie des plus capitalistes de la région, des rapprochements sont possibles.

A l'instar des efforts d'intégration entre les six économies du Golfe, et un peu comme les Palestiniens avec les Jordaniens, le Liban et la Syrie se dirigent donc vers une union économique. Le premier

ministre libanais Rafiq Hariri a lui-même rappelé voilà quelques jours que bien que les difficultés à résoudre restaient nombreuses, il n'existait pas d'autre choix que celui de l'intégration.

Dans cette ère de mondialisation, la marge de manoeuvre est très étroite pour les petites économies comme celle de la Jordanie ou celle de la Syrie. Ou bien elles s'ouvrent sur d'autres économies, la région et le marché mondial, ou elles continuent d'assurer un faible niveau de vie. Certains parlent même d'une intégration régionale encore plus importante, entre Israël et ses voisins. Il est bien sûr bien trop tôt pour cela, mais cette possibilité requiert une réflexion approfondie, loin des sentiments haineux inspirés par la politique extrémiste du Likoud.

Lier les économies arabes

Mais commençons d'abord par essayer de lier les éco-

mies arabes selon les canaux suivants: Liban/Syrie, Jordanie/Palestine et Arabie saoudite/Pays du Golfe. L'intégration syro-libanaise est un fait plus réel que jamais, et les relations économiques entre les pays du Golfe sont sur la bonne voie. Mais qu'en est-il de la Jordanie et des Palestiniens? En fait, il est dans l'intérêt des deux peuples d'augmenter leurs échanges. Cependant, Israël complique actuellement ces échanges entre les deux rives du Jourdain.

L'avenir de la petite Jordanie ou du petit Liban est précaire sans points économiques solides avec les Syriens.

Il va sans dire que les Syriens peuvent aussi profiter de ces liens. Car ils sont tout comme les Palestiniens, les Jordaniens ou les Libanais, incapables de survivre dans l'état actuel de divisions et le manque de coordination économique qui existe dans la région.

Riad al Khouri
MEBA SAR L



A l'image de Beyrouth en pleine reconstruction, l'économie du Liban est aujourd'hui à la recherche d'un nouvel élan.

Découverte

Amman ouvre son cœur

Pour la première fois, une grande foire culturelle et artistique se déroule à l'occasion du ramadan. Celle-ci a lieu dans le quartier le plus populaire d'Amman, au cœur de la basse-ville

Le tout nouveau

bâtiment de la municipalité du Grand Amman (MGA) abrite à l'occasion du ramadan une importante manifestation qui redonne à la capitale jordanienne sa grandeur culturelle.

Le lieu choisi pour construire cet établissement public est très important. Situé à côté des sources de Ras al Ain, au cœur de la basse-ville, il occupe un terrain qui sert de liaison entre le vieux Amman et ses nouveaux quartiers. Un endroit idéal pour organiser une grande manifestation culturelle populaire.

A l'initiative du secrétaire général de la MGA, Dr Mahmoud al-Abbadi, une foire culturelle et artistique a ouvert ses portes le 28 janvier dernier, accueillant le jour de son inauguration plusieurs milliers de personnes.

Celle-ci a pour but de redonner un peu d'âme à la ville pour les dix dernières nuits du ramadan.

Des activités ont lieu à la fois à l'intérieur et l'extérieur du bâtiment. Un espace de jeux permet aux enfants de profiter de balcons alors qu'une scène accueille chaque soir des spectacles folkloriques ou des concerts de chants religieux. C'est là aussi que se déroulent de nombreuses discussions, ainsi que des conférences fai-

sant voyager les curieux à travers les contes de l'Orient. Des débats animés par des hauts fonctionnaires de l'Etat ont abordé des thèmes comme celui de l'histoire de la ville d'Amman, de la vie de ses habitants. L'urbanisation des grandes villes vue à travers des œuvres littéraires a elle été au cœur d'une conférence à laquelle participait l'écrivain d'origine jordanienne Abdelrahman Munif.

A l'intérieur du bâtiment se déroule une exposition d'art et d'artisanat jordanien, exposition qui devrait se prolonger tout au long du mois de février.

Pour la fin du ramadan et la fête de l'Aïd, différents groupes de musique arabe viendront donner un concert, un feu

d'artifice étant aussi prévu. Pour Dr Saed Qammouh, responsable des relations publiques à la MGA, l'organisation de cette foire confirme le retour de la vie au cœur même d'Amman. Elle est appelée à devenir une manifestation annuelle grâce à laquelle les citoyens pourront être au courant des activités de leur ville et de ses projets.

Grâce à ce lieu qui sert de lien entre le passé et le présent d'Amman, Saed Qammouh espère que les classes populaires auront un meilleur accès à la culture. Une philosophie qu'il résume ainsi: «la culture et la pensée doivent être les droits de tous les citoyens».

Chéid Abdallah

C'est la vie

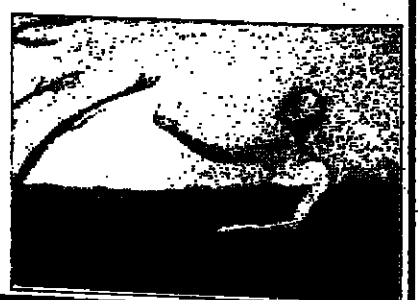
L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle «Polar» consacré aux films policiers. Le 10 février à 20h30 au Centre culturel français, *Mauvais sang*. Le 17 février à 20h30, *Poussière d'ange*

Exposition

Amanda Shedad, à partir du 17 février, au Centre culturel français. Pour la première fois, cette jeune peintre, qui vit en Angleterre, expose en Jordanie.



En raison de la fête de l'Aïd et l'Aïr, le Star ne paraîtra pas la semaine prochaine, jeudi 13 février.

Suleiman Sweiss

Analyse

Une bataille électorale mal engagée

Après plusieurs semaines de débat, la loi électorale appliquée lors des élections législatives de 1993 a été adoptée par la chambre des députés pour le prochain suffrage prévu en novembre. Très décrié à cause du découpage actuel, le système «une personne-une voix» s'impose donc à nouveau.

Indubitablement,

le gouvernement jordanien a remporté un succès facile la semaine passée en faisant adopter «provisoirement» la loi électorale provisoire numéro 15 de l'année 1993 par une large majorité à la chambre des députés. Cette nouvelle victoire contre l'opposition s'ajoute à celle remportée l'été dernier autour de la bataille du prix du pain. Dans les deux cas, la maladresse d'une certaine opposition (principalement le courant islamique) a facilité la tâche du gouvernement.

L'épisode de la semaine dernière illustre bien cette constatation. En effet, voilà longtemps que le projet de loi électorale a été transféré à la commission juridique, dominée par les islamistes. Subitement, cette commission a annoncé qu'elle avait terminé l'examen du projet de loi, formulant une proposition unique: le rejet total du projet qui souhaitait conserver le principe «une personne-une voix», système décrié par de nombreux partis politiques jordanien.

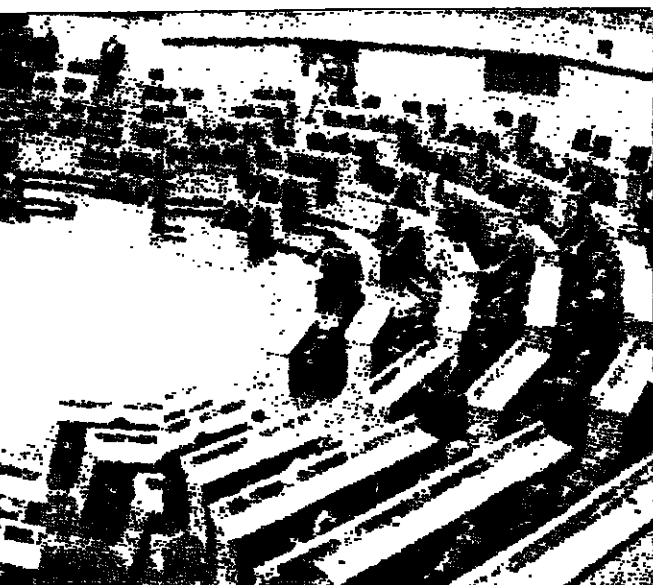
Le 26 janvier dernier, la chambre des députés a engagé le débat sur ce projet de loi. Trois camps se sont formés parmi les parlementaires: celui du soutien total au système proposé, celui du refus et celui de l'approbation à condition d'opérer quelques modifications. Mais au bout du compte, lorsque l'heure du suffrage est arrivée, 51 députés ont voté pour le maintien provisoire de la loi provisoire. 21 s'y opposant.

Certains observateurs n'ont pas pu cacher leur stupeur

quant à la date choisie par les islamistes pour engager une bataille mal préparée avec le gouvernement. Quelques semaines auparavant, le Premier ministre Abdel Karim Kabarihi annonçait que son cabinet était prêt à engager un débat avec «toutes les forces vives de la société pour trouver la formule qui ferait l'objet d'un consensus national».

Selon des informations provenant de milieux proches du Front d'action islamique (FAI), les islamistes ont cherché à gagner le soutien de la population à l'approche du début de la campagne électorale, en profitant de l'écho médiatique donné à la polémique concernant les programmes télévisés jugés scandaleux diffusés dans la nuit du premier de l'an, ou bien au nouveau projet de loi déposé visant à interdire l'alcool. Ils voulaient démontrer à l'opinion publique que le gouvernement et les députés qui le soutiennent étaient seuls face à une majorité de l'opinion publique opposée à ce système de voix unique.

Mais ils n'ont pas su coordonner leurs efforts avec ceux d'autres formations politiques, se privant ainsi de voix susceptibles de voter contre ce projet. Il s'avère aujourd'hui que les islamistes ont fait un mauvais



La loi électorale a obtenu une large majorité à la Chambre des députés avec 51 voix pour et 21 contre (photo d'archives).

calcul et ont perdu une bataille simplement parce que celle-ci a été mal préparée et lancée à un moment où la conjoncture n'était pas propice.

Aucune alternative proposée

Les conséquences de ce vote sont aujourd'hui prévisibles: chaque camp va continuer de maintenir sa position et la lutte autour de la loi électorale va se poursuivre car ce sujet englobe des intérêts politiques et sociaux contradictoires.

La déclaration du député centriste Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh suffit à prévoir que la polémique n'est pas close. Celui-ci écrivait au lendemain de

l'adoption de la loi dans le quotidien Al Rai qu'une étude réalisée sur ce sujet démontrait «que la voix unique contribuait à la régression de la vie politique».

Ce qui reste le plus étonnant est que tout le monde reconnaît que cette loi a besoin d'être amendée, mais que personne ne propose d'alternative, malgré le fait que ce débat dure depuis 1993! Les élections législatives auront lieu en novembre prochain: il reste donc encore neuf mois pendant lesquels de nouvelles surprises peuvent encore avoir lieu dans ce débat autour de la loi électorale.

Suleiman Sweiss

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Italy	Italy
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New Zealand	New Zealand
Norway	Norway
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THE STAR'S WORKSTATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NO

Edited by Zeid Nasser

The need for country-wide 'Points of Presence' for Internet service providers:

Haves and have-nots

By Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

CYBER SPACE is, in a sense, the virtual replication of societies and cultures; email addresses reflect national origin, through the last two letters of every address (JO for Jordan and EG for Egypt), web pages belong to parties ranging from Harvard university to the small antique shops in Western Amman and news groups cater for debates and discussions on issues of interest to all tastes and nationalities. This is paralleled by the fact that Internet service providers (ISPs) are mushrooming around the world's different countries and contributing to the drastic increases in Cyber space users.

The virtual life of Cyber space is also, and quite unfortunately, similar to real life in that inequality in opportunities and fortunes abound in it just as it is the case in real life.

This inequality of access is vividly manifested by the fact that the Internet is not as readily accessible in all the parts of a country, which is supposedly Internet on-line. To understand this issue, one must look at the basic underlying technology adopted by ISPs around the world to provide Internet access and services: Any ISP's initial investment would be in a suite of computer servers running necessary software (usually includes mail, web, and news

servers) which is connected by leased lines to another ISP on the Internet. The type of computer servers can range from high level Intel-based PCs to heavy duty UNIX machines, just as the bandwidth of the leased line can vary from 9.6 kbps to more than 45Mbps.

Once this initial setup is established, the ISP starts off

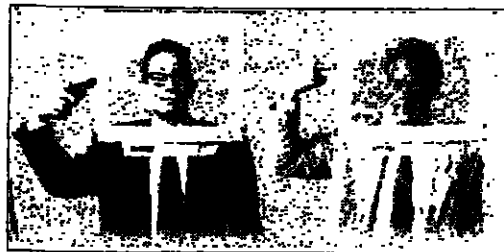
as America On-Line, IDT and AT&T offer their customers the ability to connect through a local phone call in their own area. They provide many geographic areas with POPs that connect users to their main servers with only a local or, even, free phone call. Once the issue of how an ISP's Point Of Presence works is understood, it becomes quite clear how Jordan's Internet service providers are contributing to the current inequality.

The ISPs in Jordan have only one POP in their own location. This means that only subscribers from Amman have the privilege of a local phone call to use the Internet.

Therefore, subscribers in Irbid, where two major Universities are situated, or in the busy port city of Aqaba must add to their subscription bill the cost of the national phone calls they have to make to log on to their accounts.

With prices for subscriptions, especially for Web access, being—in the words of one Internet user—"prohibitive"—the fact that many people in the country will have to add a hefty charge of national phone calls to use the servers in Amman adds to the prohibitive nature of the cost.

It explains why the spread of Internet use outside Amman is quite slow. Another reason is the concentration of all marketing efforts by companies in



The have-nots (left), compared to the haves

by providing access to its servers through what is referred to as a Point Of Presence (POP), which can be loosely defined as the pool of modems connected to a router or to a serial expansion card that provides the subscribers of the ISP with the access over phone lines to its Internet servers.

Once this initial setup is up and running, ISPs usually expand through increasing their POPs to other geographic locations. This is done by connecting a router and a pool of modems, through a leased line, to the servers without the need for extra Internet servers or investing in another connection to the Internet.

Basically, this is how big players in the Internet's largest market—the USA—such

as America On-Line, IDT and AT&T offer their customers the ability to connect through a local phone call in their own area. They provide many geographic areas with POPs that connect users to their main servers with only a local or, even, free phone call. Once the issue of how an ISP's Point Of Presence works is understood, it becomes quite clear how Jordan's Internet service providers are contributing to the current inequality.

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What we need is a commitment

Reference to last week's article "More Bandwidth Please", by Jawad Abbassi, a Star reader, Mr. Bashar Arafeh writes:

WHEN A reporter from AD Dostour daily asked me, some days ago, what my wishes for 1997 were concerning the IT industry, I replied that I hoped to see decreases in taxes on computers, to allow the Internet to spread more, reaching more and more homes in Jordan; because, as we all know, it will be the basic means of education in the coming years!

Upon reading what Mr. Abbassi wrote in his article, (The Star's Workstation 30 January), suggesting a publicly owned Internet connection, I say that even if prices of computers go down by about a third, which is almost the tariff plus taxes we pay for them in Jordan, it would be extremely difficult for a normal home user to upgrade his technological status from a computer literate user to an Internet literate one.

I say this because prices for connecting to the Internet are extremely high, compared to anywhere else in the world. This is mainly due to the price of the bandwidth

that any supplier must pay, in order to offer his customers a sensible Internet connection.

I say all of this to second what Mr. Abbassi proposed concerning a public owned connection and reiterate that the main issue is:

What is the concept that the government wants to

Well, it takes more practice than words, should the government opt for the latter choice, there is a need to go one step ahead and translate that choice into action by being a main distributor of bandwidths and acting only as a regulatory establishment, similar to that of telecommunication, if not the same one even.

I also go beyond Mr. Abbassi's good gesture of detailing how to make this investment pay back, to add that the government will be making its money back from different sources such as the return on increased telephone calls resulting from more Internet access, and also from taxes and percentages taken from suppliers and so forth.

We, in Jordan, should receive a clear answer from our government, concerning the Internet, which is to be translated into work; and I think a public, wide bandwidth for Jordan is the backbone.

The measure of its success may not be realized to the full now, but it will surely be felt by the generations to come.

email: B.Arafeh-ideal@nets.com.jo



pursue?

Does it want to keep the Internet limited to a certain level of users, or does it want to popularize it so that most of our "Internet hungry" people can enjoy easy access, taking into account its enormous impact on the education of the coming generation.

This concept should be the driving force for any governmental decision, before thinking of the return on investment and so on.

News update

The most popular sites on the Web

● According to a study by PC-Meter, which determined the top five World Wide Web sites, it turned out that America On-Line's site was the most popular, accounting for a staggering 40.3 percent of activity on the Web.

Second came the Yahoo site, third was the Netscape site while fourth and fifth positions were taken by Web Crawler and Microsoft

Amman. In fact, Western Amman is to be precise.

It seems Amman will always have a disproportionate number of Internet haves, unless ISPs decide to expand their services by establishing POPs in Jordan's other major cities and tap into the market of Jordan's Internet have-nots.

email: abbassi@nets.com.jo

respectively. Following this bit of news, America On-Line's site probably represents the best spot on the World Wide Web for advertising and it is already generating considerable revenues.

What's more, the figures prove again that the vast majority of Web users come from the United States.

Novell's 'Product Promotions' strategy

● As part of its aim to continuously support its existing users, and create goodwill among already satisfied customers, Novell has adopted a 'Product Promotion' strategy by which you can receive free or very low priced upgrades on software.

For example, up until late last month, Novell was offering a free upgrade to IntraNetWare for NetWare 4.x customers and a GroupWise 5.0 upgrade for version 4.1 users, among other products.

It is expected that there is more to come, so, to receive any additional information on these opportunities contact Novell Middle East in Dubai on telephone ++ 971 4 316444.

Compaq announce a new series of Presario PCs

● Compaq Middle East has announced the availability of its latest Presario series in the Middle East, including the Presario 3000, 4000 and others.

All new Presario PCs come with advanced multimedia and Internet capabilities, and are aimed at demanding home users or power hungry office users, with a choice of Pentium processors from 166MHz all the way up to 200MHz.

For more information on the new Compaq Presario series, contact Ideal Tech on telephone 688123.

Holyfield-Tyson rematch set for 3 May

By Jennifer Frey
LA Times-Washington Post
News service

NEW YORK—Don King gave his interpretation of Macbeth and William Faulkner, quoted Ernest Hemingway and paused to give tribute to both Snoop Doggy Dog and Spike Lee. Mike Tyson yawned. Evander Holyfield simply smiled and laughed.

At a news conference that included all of boxing's usual bizarreness, King dubbed the coming rematch 3 May in Las Vegas between Holyfield and Tyson "The Sound and the Fury" and, when he paused long enough to let Tyson get a word in, beamed as his fighter declared that he would knock out Holyfield the second time around.

"I didn't fight that well," Tyson said, "and I promise I'll be better next fight. ... I'm looking for a knockout."

Holyfield, who stunned almost everyone when he defeated Tyson with an 11th-round technical knockout on last 9 November, refused to get drawn into all the hype and the hoopla. Instead, he calmly referred to the rematch as a "big challenge" and insisted that he felt no qualms about giving Tyson the chance to take his heavyweight title



Can Holyfield make it and beat Tyson again?

"The man gave me an opportunity and I took the opportunity," Holyfield said, when asked, repeatedly, why he would agree to a fight from which he had nothing to gain, save of course for a big payday. "I feel that it's only right to give him an opportunity in return."

Tyson seemed to acknowledge Monday that he was not

as well prepared for the first fight as he should have been, and vowed to be in the best shape of his life in May. And after admitting that the entire Tyson team viewed Holyfield as something of a joke in the first matchup, John Horne, one of Tyson's managers, said Monday that "come 3 May, Evander Holyfield will get the Mike Tyson he really wants."

Still, Tyson didn't seem to

have had much of an attitude adjustment when it came to his assessment of Holyfield.

"Whatever opinion I had of him the last fight, my opinion hasn't changed," Tyson said. "I know that I'm going to beat him."

With a career record of 45-2, Tyson never before has faced a fighter who has beaten him. Buster Douglas, the only boxer ever to knock out

Tyson, did not meet Tyson in a rematch. And Douglas and Holyfield have another thing in common—a strong left jab. When asked how he would react to Holyfield's left jab in the second meeting, Tyson was abrupt.

"I'm going to knock the man out," he said.

Holyfield made frequent references to his religious devotion and its role in his life the first time these two fighters met, and, in the process, he turned the bout into a battle between the devout Christian and the convicted rapist, with "good" triumphing over "evil" in the end. Monday, King tried to put his own spin on the rematch.

And what a spin it was. In a rather lengthy—and at times utterly bewildering—disquisition, King expounded on the true meaning of Shakespeare's Macbeth (his version) and how he came to see this fight as the "sound and fury." Suffice it to say, it was an interesting choice of words, when taken in the context of the full Shakespearean quote ("It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing").

King made a lot more sense when he talked about topics closer to his own area of expertise—i.e., marketing and money.

"The Lord chose Evander to be the Prince of Peace or whatever," King said. "He touched me and said, 'Get the money!'"

The 34-year-old Holyfield, who got \$11 million in November, will get at least \$35 million in May. Tyson, who made \$30 million in the first fight, will get at least \$20 million for the rematch.

All of King's bluster, however, could not obscure one central fact: When Holyfield agreed to get back in the ring with Tyson, when he agreed to a fight that forces him to prove that his own stunning victory in November was not a fluke, he set the stage for one of the most anticipated boxing

trash talk or hype or any of that," said Jim Thomas, the lawyer who brokered the deal for Holyfield. "This fight speaks for itself."

That is, when King isn't speaking for it. ■



The 1997 Porsche Boxster, which was recently shown at the international auto show in Detroit. (PR NewsFoto)

German F.A. says England should have talked about World Cup bid

BONN—German soccer chiefs said Tuesday that England should have consulted them before the country decided on a rival European bid for the 2006 World Cup finals.

The German soccer federation (DFB), caught up in a row which also involves England and Europe's governing body UEFA over bidding for the event, said it had announced back in 1993 that it would try to get the finals.

It feels the English Football Association (F.A.) should have told Germany of its intentions before it expressed interest in the event much later following the country's successful hosting of last year's European championship.

"You have to ask the question whether a country should go to a partner and tell them rather than let them be informed through the media," DFB spokesman Wolfgang Niersbach said.

"It is normal that countries should talk to each other. I told (F.A. official) David Davies that we are not happy that things started like this. It shouldn't happen like that."

"Perhaps it is forgotten but (DFB chief) Egidius Braun was a huge supporter of England to get Euro 96 at times when some people were say-

ing the event can't go to England because of the hooligans."

Last Friday UEFA announced it would be backing the Germans' campaign, setting off outrage in British sporting and political circles. The F.A. called the decision undemocratic.

But the Germans believe Europe can fend off competi-

tion largely with UEFA, has also attempted to build bridges with the DFB.

"We have received a fax from (F.A. chief executive Graham) Kelly saying that the argument is not with the Germans and we want to stay good friends and colleagues," Niersbach said.

"There have been no dirty tricks on our part in all this. We have always put our cards firmly on the table."

Germany plans to put Franz Beckenbauer, the most successful figure in its footballing history, at the top of its bid.

The former World Cup-winning captain and coach has agreed to take on the same kind of leading role which France gave to its former leading light Michel Platini in its successful bid for the 1998 finals.

The DFB wants to avoid using taxpayers' money during the bidding process but millions of dollars will be pumped into rebuilding the country's stadium if it wins.

There are already plans to spend around \$60 million rebuilding Munich's Olympic stadium which staged the final of the last time the country held the tournament in 1974. The Germans plan to put a new roof over the whole of the stadium. ■



Barcelona board backs Robson ahead of vital cup clash

BARCELONA—Barcelona's club board gave coach Bobby Robson a vote of confidence ahead of Thursday's vital Spanish Cup clash with Real Madrid.

The former England coach has also been backed by a group of fans who took out a newspaper advert, asking for "respect, justice and support" for Robson.

He had been heavily criticized in the wake of his side's 2-2 draw with Oviedo, a game they had led 2-0.

It was the second time in less than a month that Barcelona had thrown away a 2-0 lead at home. But despite the setback the board has restated its "absolute and complete" confidence in the team, including the coach.

"At the moment there are no objective circumstances which could justify lack of confidence in the team," said club spokesman Jose Maria Antros.

Antros explained that the club's position would not change in the near future.

"It could be we don't get through the Cup tie...and it's also possible that we don't beat Espanyol in the league (on Sunday) but even then the board will continue offering its complete confidence in the team," he said. Robson of possible replacements for Robson are rife.

The Barcelona daily 'El Periodico de Catalunya' on Tuesday pointed to Ajax coach Louis van Gaal as the next man to take over the hot seat in the Camp Nou stadium.

Sports daily 'El Mundo Deportivo' carried an interview with Robson in which he hit out at his critics.

"There are people who will not stop until they have managed to finish me. Reading the newspapers at times I feel as

if they were shooting at me," said Robson.

The city's press was also attacked by a group of fans who took out an advert to support a man they called "a coach of international prestige" and a "polite and expert professional."

"Robson has been condemned by a large part of Catalan sports journalism," read the advert, which gave a contact telephone and the number of an account to which donations to the Robson support group could be made.

An ankle injury has left Barcelona goalkeeper Vitor Baisa doubtful for Thursday's fourth round tie. Robson's side take a 3-2 advantage from the first leg to Madrid.

Experienced reserve Carlos Busquets is likely to take over in the absence of the Portuguese international. ■